86-01

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

Monthly Wholesale Trade

Sales and Inventories

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NOTICE OF REVISION TO MONTHLY WHOLESALE SALES, INVENTORIES, AND STOCK/SALES RATIO ESTIMATES: Monthly merchant wholesalers' sales, inventories, and stock/sales ratios by kind of business for the United States have been revised for the period January 1976 through January 1986 utilizing the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The data shown in this report reflect this revision. Revised estimates for other months are shown in the publication "Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976 through December 1985."

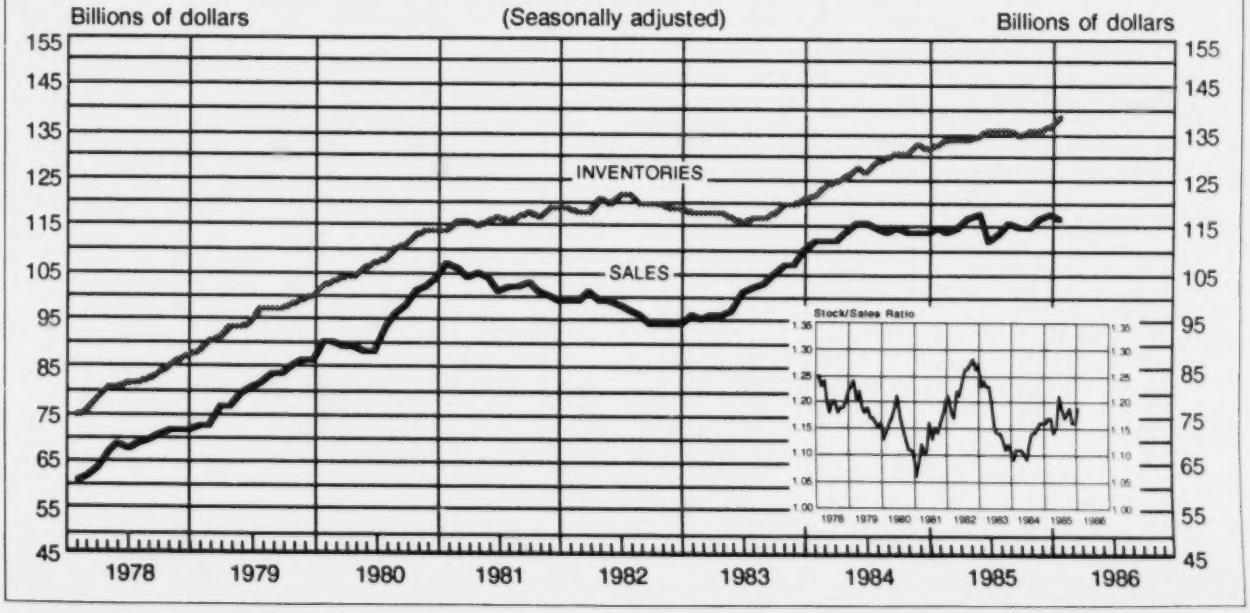
Sales January 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were $116.2 billion, little changed from the revised December level and from a year ago. January sales of durable goods were little changed from December and were 3.5 percent above a year ago. January sales of nondurable goods were little changed from December and from a year ago.

Inventories Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $137.7 billion at the end of January, up 1.3 percent from the revised December level and were up 4.5 percent from a year ago. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers increased 1.6 percent from the December level, and were 2.9 percent above a year ago. Inventories of nondurable goods wholesalers were little changed from the December level and were up 7.6 percent from January 1985.

Stock/Sales Ratio The January stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.19, up from the December ratio of 1.16 and above the year ago ratio of 1.16.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



U.S. Department of Commerce
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The Monthly Wholesale Trade Report for February is scheduled to be released April 8, 1986 at 10:00 a.m.

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Table 1A. Adjusted Estimated Monthley Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC Code	Kind of Business	1986	1985											
		Jan.P	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
		Data ADJUSTED for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences												
	Sales, total	110,171	113,738	113,584	113,759	116,588	116,712	111,073	113,301	115,146	114,344	113,675	115,762	116,352
50	Durable goods	52,506	51,791	52,734	52,091	52,284	53,575	51,004	50,998	52,536	52,249	52,469	53,406	53,948
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,358	10,772	10,574	10,821	10,972	11,657	10,979	11,299	11,513	11,142	11,383	11,726	11,700
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,990	1,799	1,828	1,774	1,841	1,902	1,958	2,090	2,037	1,981	1,978	2,044	2,083
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,036	3,504	3,584	3,784	3,853	3,807	3,743	3,756	3,816	3,834	3,823	3,900	3,814
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,870	5,279	5,044	5,065	5,040	5,067	4,925	4,965	5,061	5,305	5,032	4,886	4,884
506	Electrical goods	7,882	7,551	7,470	7,400	7,196	7,232	6,976	7,143	7,222	7,481	7,720	7,771	7,799
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,398	3,567	3,407	3,562	3,540	3,320	3,164	3,285	3,277	3,462	3,643	3,513
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,585	13,639	13,662	14,172	13,860	13,659	13,123	13,283	13,575	13,387	13,451	13,479	13,830
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,646	4,430	4,116	4,668	4,800	4,849	4,376	4,187	4,670	4,434	4,230	4,555	4,721
51	Nondurable goods	62,575	61,947	60,850	61,728	64,304	63,137	60,069	62,303	62,608	62,095	61,206	62,356	62,904
511	Paper & paper products	3,295	2,826	2,800	2,999	2,972	2,914	2,927	2,934	2,969	2,911	3,007	3,015	3,080
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,310	2,050	2,096	2,096	2,150	2,131	2,045	2,257	2,203	2,179	2,215	2,214	2,211
514	Groceries & related products	19,169	17,608	17,782	17,910	17,736	17,916	17,677	18,135	17,938	17,974	18,124	18,676	18,308
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,382	9,534	9,093	8,213	8,771	8,434	7,696	7,681	6,971	6,814	6,830	7,464	7,418
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,316	3,094	3,202	3,194	3,300	3,271	3,208	3,345	3,452	3,059	2,917	3,201	3,313
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,681	8,372	8,615	8,729	8,912	8,575	8,461	9,096	9,202	9,079	8,448	7,809	9,472
	Inventories, total	137,692	131,752	133,093	133,267	133,203	133,667	134,931	134,949	134,869	134,410	134,010	134,831	135,940
50	Durable goods	88,671	86,179	87,245	87,915	87,275	87,232	87,446	87,282	87,091	86,686	87,037	87,281	87,246
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	14,807	14,883	15,150	15,107	15,472	15,539	15,918	15,647	15,579	15,650	15,645	15,532	16,023
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,466	2,889	2,979	2,923	2,917	3,002	3,051	3,352	3,273	3,230	3,257	3,282	3,368
503	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	9,007	9,221	9,150	9,132	8,988	8,671	8,599	8,544	8,548	8,555	8,425	8,367	8,055
506	Electrical goods	12,553	12,497	12,815	12,746	12,764	12,832	12,874	12,884	12,927	12,837	12,737	12,680	12,586
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,660	5,899	5,912	6,023	6,106	6,261	6,069	6,038	5,920	5,852	5,871	5,836	5,775
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,174	29,622	30,190	29,857	29,341	29,518	29,423	29,497	29,785	29,495	29,713	30,469	30,005
51	Nondurable goods	49,021	45,573	45,744	46,252	45,928	46,435	47,485	47,667	47,778	47,722	47,773	47,550	48,694
511	Paper & paper products	3,124	2,810	2,879	2,894	3,007	2,889	2,953	2,905	2,974	2,981	3,016	3,010	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,502	9,142	9,187	9,309	9,430	9,551	9,666	9,605	9,743	9,658	9,970	9,913	10,265
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,264	6,793	6,836	6,881	6,397	6,696	6,791	6,767	6,591	6,839	6,902	6,807	7,150
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,703	3,368	3,304	3,444	3,486	3,494	3,596	3,474	3,595	3,596	3,582	3,566	3,632
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,569	8,897	8,893	9,038	8,769	8,961	9,624	9,404	9,480	9,674	9,593	9,586	9,470
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.19	1.16	1.17	1.17	1.14	1.15	1.21	1.19	1.17	1.18	1.19	1.16	1.16
50	Durable goods	1.69	1.66	1.72	1.67	1.67	1.63	1.71	1.71	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.63	1.62
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	1.67	1.38	1.43	1.40	1.41	1.33	1.45	1.38	1.35	1.40	1.37	1.32	1.37
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.74	1.61	1.63	1.65	1.58	1.58	1.56	1.60	1.61	1.63	1.70	1.61	1.62
503	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.85	1.75	1.81	1.80	1.78	1.71	1.75	1.72	1.69	1.61	1.66	1.72	1.77
506	Electrical goods	1.59	1.66	1.74	1.72	1.80	1.77	1.85	1.80	1.79	1.74	1.65	1.63	1.61
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.64	1.73	1.66	1.77	1.71	1.77	1.83	1.91	1.80	1.79	1.70	1.60	1.64
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.19	2.24	2.11	2.13	2.16	2.24	2.22	2.19	2.26	2.21	2.26	2.17
51	Nondurable goods	0.78	0.74	0.79	0.75	0.71	0.74	0.79	0.77	0.76	0.77	0.78	0.76	0.77
511	Paper & paper products	0.97	0.99	1.00	0.99	1.01	0.99	1.01	0.99	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	0.55	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.53	0.53	0.55	0.53	0.54	0.54	0.55	0.53	0.55
515	Farm-product raw materials	0.91	0.71	0.75	0.84	0.73	0.79	0.88	0.90	0.95	1.00	1.01	0.91	0.96
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.09	1.03	1.08	1.06	1.07	1.12	1.04	1.04	0.98	0.98	1.11	1.10
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.10	1.06	1.03	1.04	0.98	1.05	1.14	1.03	1.03	1.07	1.13	1.23	1.00

P=PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE. SEE SAMPLE REVISION AND ESTIMATION PROCEDURES IN REVISED MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE, SALES AND INVENTORIES: JANUARY 1976-DECEMBER 1985.

NOTE: PRELIMINARY INVENTORIES ESTIMATES HAVE BEEN MODIFIED PRIOR TO PUBLICATION BASED ON PAST RELATIONSHIPS OF TABLE PRELIMINARY AND FINAL ESTIMATES. MERCHANT WHOLESALERS TOTALS AND GROUP TOTALS INCLUDE DATA FOR SOME KINDS OF BUSINESS NOT SHOWN SEPARATELY.

Table 1B. Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986	1985											TOTAL
		Jan.[P]	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1985
		Data NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variation or trading-day differences													
	Sales, total	114,321	110,972	103,209	115,647	117,050	123,536	110,634	113,211	116,066	111,775	121,011	113,874	116,941	1,373,926
50	Durable goods	50,059	48,839	45,513	52,409	53,068	55,664	51,106	51,406	54,272	52,040	57,296	52,393	52,653	626,749
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,635	10,567	9,408	11,027	11,301	12,507	11,418	11,446	11,495	10,128	12,294	11,562	11,419	136,572
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,789	1,646	1,654	1,776	1,924	1,982	1,952	2,025	2,049	1,999	2,292	2,046	1,975	23,521
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,444	2,983	2,870	3,466	3,853	4,190	3,990	4,090	4,281	4,040	4,354	3,857	3,276	45,260
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,670	5,295	4,716	5,414	5,171	5,462	4,935	4,791	5,188	5,347	5,163	4,417	4,694	60,513
506	Electrical goods	7,165	7,045	6,685	7,319	6,879	7,001	7,095	7,257	7,465	7,790	8,538	7,911	8,025	90,004
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,241	3,245	3,126	3,216	3,594	3,671	3,350	3,395	3,512	3,284	3,629	3,563	3,307	41,094
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,675	12,871	12,277	14,455	14,262	14,574	13,229	13,057	13,779	13,307	14,339	12,819	12,968	162,886
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,563	4,266	3,696	4,590	4,866	5,091	3,921	3,994	5,058	4,580	4,772	4,591	4,551	59,966
51	Nondurable goods	64,262	62,133	57,696	63,148	63,982	67,872	59,528	61,805	61,794	59,735	63,715	61,481	64,288	747,177
511	Paper & paper products	3,264	2,866	2,696	2,944	2,963	2,998	2,842	2,899	3,115	2,858	3,245	2,952	2,991	35,369
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,395	2,198	1,915	2,067	2,212	2,174	2,015	2,171	2,194	2,194	2,403	2,130	2,207	25,823
514	Groceries & related products	16,998	17,495	16,359	17,713	17,649	19,136	17,571	18,625	18,369	17,543	18,758	18,244	18,661	218,093
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,921	10,440	8,747	6,878	8,420	9,362	6,888	6,316	6,399	5,799	7,049	8,210	8,256	94,764
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,686	2,525	2,472	2,913	3,175	3,621	3,256	3,690	3,670	3,813	3,109	3,284	3,860	39,388
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,830	7,418	7,349	8,973	9,589	10,650	8,859	9,149	9,009	8,602	8,473	7,270	9,377	104,712
	Inventories, total	136,257	132,359	133,675	134,418	134,287	132,425	133,469	132,836	132,424	133,789	136,122	136,376	137,139	(X)
50	Durable goods	87,489	86,145	86,646	87,102	87,624	87,358	87,883	87,457	87,176	87,642	87,298	87,019	86,984	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,574	14,893	15,226	15,273	15,027	15,321	15,870	15,287	14,987	15,932	15,880	15,656	16,311	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,456	2,880	3,033	2,946	2,873	2,981	3,094	3,312	3,308	3,246	3,337	3,239	3,375	(X)
503	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,917	9,179	9,086	9,050	8,754	8,645	8,676	8,655	8,710	8,692	8,349	8,395	8,958	(X)
505	Electrical goods	14,289	12,222	12,403	12,427	12,899	12,742	12,964	13,180	13,160	13,184	13,055	12,705	12,448	(X)
506	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,553	5,789	5,924	6,131	6,369	6,411	6,059	6,116	5,914	5,770	5,759	5,737	5,590	(X)
507	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,750	29,404	29,823	30,066	29,777	29,666	29,805	29,556	29,725	29,495	29,772	30,134	29,915	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	48,768	47,214	47,029	47,316	46,662	45,367	45,586	45,379	45,248	46,147	48,824	49,357	50,155	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,077	2,773	2,876	2,865	2,974	2,924	2,971	2,923	3,026	2,957	2,983	3,061	3,077	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,327	8,932	9,268	9,290	9,460	9,530	9,608	9,403	9,441	9,810	10,339	10,419	10,275	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	9,022	8,665	7,903	7,542	6,439	5,404	5,227	5,177	5,339	5,998	7,357	8,148	8,759	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,510	3,196	3,193	3,385	3,545	3,315	3,679	3,575	3,591	3,509	3,836	3,808	3,312	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,912	9,190	9,592	10,104	9,655	8,914	9,095	8,924	8,737	9,026	9,237	9,174	9,451	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.19	1.19	1.30	1.16	1.15	1.07	1.21	1.17	1.14	1.20	1.12	1.20	1.17	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.75	1.74	1.90	1.66	1.65	1.56	1.72	1.70	1.61	1.68	1.52	1.66	1.65	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	1.42	1.41	1.62	1.39	1.36	1.24	1.39	1.34	1.30	1.57	1.29	1.35	1.43	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.64	1.75	1.83	1.66	1.49	1.50	1.59	1.64	1.61	1.62	1.46	1.58	1.71	(X)
503	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.63	1.75	1.93	1.67	1.69	1.58	1.76	1.61	1.66	1.62	1.52	1.90	1.85	(X)
505	Electrical goods	1.74	1.73	1.85	1.70	1.88	1.82	1.83	1.82	1.76	1.69	1.53	1.61	1.55	(X)
506	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.78	1.89	1.91	1.77	1.75	1.81	1.80	1.65	1.76	1.50	1.61	1.69	(X)
507	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.35	2.29	2.43	2.08	2.04	2.04	2.25	2.20	2.10	2.22	2.08	2.35	2.14	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	0.82	0.76	0.82	0.75	0.73	0.67	0.77	0.73	0.73	0.77	0.77	0.80	0.78	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	0.94	0.97	1.07	0.97	1.00	0.98	1.05	1.01	0.97	1.03	0.92	1.04	1.03	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	0.54	0.51	0.57	0.52	0.52	0.50	0.55	0.50	0.51	0.55	0.55	0.57	0.55	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.14	0.83	0.90	0.85	0.76	0.58	0.76	0.82	0.83	1.03	1.04	0.99	1.06	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.30	1.27	1.29	1.16	1.12	0.92	1.13	0.97	0.98	0.92	1.23	1.16	0.86	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.27	1.24	1.30	1.13	1.01	0.84	1.03	0.98	0.97	1.05	1.09	1.26	1.01	(X)

[P] PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE. SEE SAMPLE DESIGN AND ESTIMATION PROCEDURES IN REVISED MONTHLY WHOLESALE TRADE, SALES AND INVENTORIES: JANUARY 1974-DECEMBER 1985.
X CUMULATIVE DATA ARE NOT APPLICABLE FOR INVENTORIES OR STOCK/SALES RATIOS. CUMULATIVE SEASONALLY ADJUSTED SALES ESTIMATES ARE NOT TABULATED.

NOTE: PRELIMINARY INVENTORIES ESTIMATES HAVE BEEN MODIFIED PRIOR TO PUBLICATION BASED ON PAST RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PRELIMINARY AND FINAL ESTIMATES.
MERCHANT WHOLESALERS TOTALS AND GRAND TOTALS INCLUDE DATA FOR SOME KINDS OF BUSINESS NOT SHOWN SEPARATELY.

Table 2. Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC CODE	Kind of business	Unadjusted				Adjusted[1]			
		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		Jan. 1986 from Dec. 1985	Jan. 1986 from Jan. 1985	Jan. 1986 from Dec. 1985	Jan. 1986 from Jan. 1985	Jan. 1986 from Dec. 1985	Jan. 1986 from Jan. 1985	Jan. 1986 from Dec. 1985	Jan. 1986 from Jan. 1985
	Total	-4.0	+1.2	+0.8	+4.5	-0.6	+2.1	+1.3	+4.5
50	Durable goods	-4.9	+2.5	+0.6	+2.8	-0.7	+3.5	+1.6	+2.9
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	-3.4	+4.4	+1.6	+11.4	-3.4	+5.0	+3.6	+11.6
502	Furniture & home furnishings	-9.6	+8.4	+2.4	+20.0	-4.5	+10.6	+2.9	+20.0
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	+5.1	+15.5	(S)	(S)	+5.9	+15.1	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	+3.7	-6.8	+2.5	-2.3	-0.3	-7.7	+4.1	-2.3
506	Electrical goods	-10.7	+1.7	-1.3	+0.5	+1.1	+4.4	-0.3	+0.4
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	-2.0	-0.1	-0.7	-4.1	-1.9	+1.6	-2.0	-3.9
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	-9.3	-1.1	-0.6	+1.2	-1.8	-0.4	+0.6	+1.7
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	0.0	+6.7	(S)	(S)	-1.6	+4.9	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	-3.2	+0.2	+1.2	+7.5	-0.5	+1.0	+0.7	+7.6
511	Paper & paper products	+9.1	+13.9	0.0	+11.0	+5.0	+14.5	+0.7	+11.2
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	+8.5	+12.0	(S)	(S)	+4.5	+12.7	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	+2.1	+8.6	+0.5	+15.6	+2.1	+9.0	+3.2	+15.9
515	Farm-product raw materials	-4.1	-24.1	+3.0	+6.6	-0.5	-22.6	+1.6	+7.1
516	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	-30.2	+6.8	+6.0	+9.8	+0.1	+7.2	+2.0	+9.9
519	Misc. nondurable goods	-16.5	+5.6	+4.9	+7.9	-8.4	+3.7	+0.8	+8.1

S DATA DO NOT MEET PUBLICATION STANDARDS.

[1]ADJUSTED FOR SEASONAL VARIATION AND, IN THE CASE OF SALES, ALSO FOR TRADING-DAY DIFFERENCES.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972*, and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +0.6

[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

percent to -0.5 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +1.1 percent to -0.4 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarily, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

CLASSIFICATION DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MONTHLY SURVEY AND 1977 AND 1982 CENSUSES OF WHOLESALE TRADE

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

[3]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program*, U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series*, Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.9	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

Table 4. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of business	1985												1986	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.
	Sales,[1] total	.945	1.049	.975	1.066	1.020	.978	1.025	.954	1.056	1.017	.977	.977	.908	1.016
50	Durable goods	.935	1.047	.987	1.048	1.020	.985	1.050	.976	1.083	1.013	.956	.943	.897	1.009
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	.934	1.067	1.002	1.078	1.059	.986	1.012	.897	1.063	1.014	.963	.981	.890	1.019
502	Furniture & home furnishings	.955	1.031	1.015	1.052	1.009	.939	1.034	.998	1.142	1.029	.924	.915	.905	1.001
503	Lumber & other construction mat	.844	.938	.996	1.085	1.080	1.056	1.172	1.019	1.139	1.029	.843	.850	.800	.916
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	.980	1.103	1.011	1.070	1.023	.944	1.054	.970	1.006	.949	.944	.990	.935	1.069
506	Electrical goods	.932	1.013	.931	.995	1.019	1.002	1.039	1.044	1.085	1.033	1.011	.933	.895	.989
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	.912	.980	.984	1.052	1.019	1.048	1.089	.984	1.093	1.014	.916	.955	.877	.944
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	.944	1.054	.996	1.075	1.030	.969	1.042	.961	1.056	.993	.971	.940	.912	1.020
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	.929	1.054	.994	1.030	.911	.928	1.101	.985	1.123	1.076	.966	.963	.898	.994
51	Nondurable goods	.952	1.054	.969	1.081	1.010	.975	1.005	.939	1.036	1.020	.993	1.003	.918	1.023
511	Paper & paper products	.971	1.047	.960	1.033	1.003	.961	1.072	.960	1.067	1.016	.939	1.014	.933	1.005
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	.958	1.022	1.002	1.030	1.003	.945	1.027	.977	1.070	1.008	.963	1.043	.918	.986
514	Groceries & related products	.961	1.019	.972	1.069	1.014	1.001	1.042	.965	1.029	1.000	.975	.993	.920	.989
515	Farm-product raw materials	.973	1.146	.912	1.134	.930	.877	.906	.837	1.032	1.123	1.077	1.095	.962	1.081
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	.813	.963	.930	1.104	1.053	1.057	1.111	.945	1.051	1.094	1.112	.816	.772	.912
519	Misc. nondurable goods	.881	1.067	1.037	1.217	1.104	.978	1.001	.898	1.030	.966	.958	.886	.853	1.028
	Inventories,[1] total	1.007	1.010	1.009	.990	.989	.985	.982	.995	1.010	1.012	1.009	1.004	1.006	1.010
50	Durable goods	.993	1.001	1.003	1.000	1.006	1.002	1.002	1.011	1.002	.997	.997	.988	.992	1.001
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.004	1.006	1.010	.987	.998	.978	.964	1.016	1.013	1.009	1.018	1.000	1.005	1.005
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.016	1.010	.988	.994	1.014	.990	1.007	1.006	.995	.987	.999	.997	1.018	1.008
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	.993	.990	.973	1.000	1.009	1.012	1.018	1.016	.993	1.002	1.005	.990	.993	.991
506	Electrical goods	.969	.976	.995	.994	1.009	1.021	1.018	1.026	1.025	1.004	.989	.978	.968	.975
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip	1.002	1.018	1.043	1.023	1.002	1.013	.999	.986	.982	.982	.968	.983	1.002	1.018
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	.991	1.007	1.008	1.007	1.013	1.002	.999	1.001	1.001	.990	.997	.986	.991	1.007
51	Nondurable goods	1.028	1.023	1.014	.975	.960	.951	.948	.968	1.022	1.039	1.032	1.036	1.028	1.023
511	Paper & paper products	.998	.990	.989	1.011	1.008	1.008	1.016	.992	.991	1.016	.993	.987	.999	.990
514	Groceries & related products	1.011	1.001	.982	.995	.995	.978	.967	.996	1.043	1.049	1.004	.977	1.011	.998
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.161	1.095	.976	.807	.769	.768	.809	.873	1.063	1.197	1.231	1.248	1.160	1.096
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	.943	.982	1.013	1.006	1.025	1.026	.999	1.001	1.070	1.069	.914	.949	.942	.983
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.076	1.114	1.099	.994	.945	.948	.922	.934	.964	.960	.998	1.040	1.078	1.118

[1]Adjusted sales and inventory data shown in table 1A are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

NOTE: Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some groups not shown separately. The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through December 1985.

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Monthly Wholesale Trade

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Sales and Inventories

February 1986
Issued April 1986
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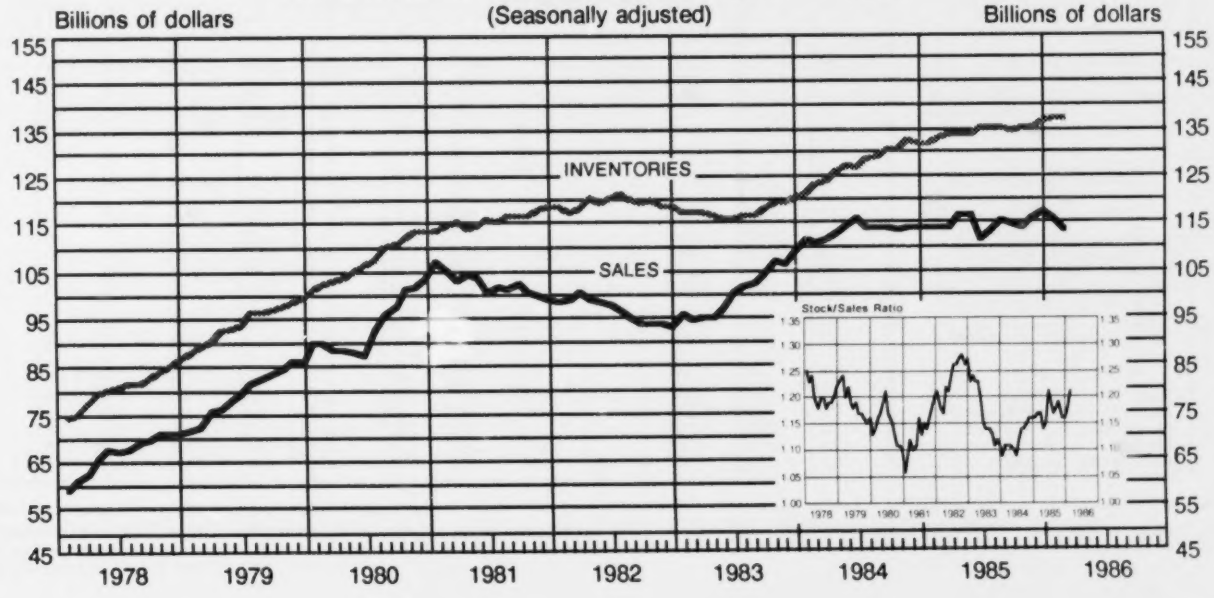
Sales. February 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and tradingday differences but not for price changes, were $113.2 billion, down 2.1 percent from the revised January level of $115.6 billion, and little changed from a year ago. The January preliminary estimate was revised downward by $523 million or about 0.5 percent. February sales of durable goods were little changed from January and were 3.7 percent above a year ago. February sales of nondurable goods were down 3.0 percent from January and were 4.2 percent below February 1985. The largest dollar volume decreases in nondurable goods sales were in the unpublished petroleum and petroleum products category and groceries and related products which were down 4.0 percent from January to $18,344 million.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $136.6 billion at the end of February, little changed from the revised January level and 2.7 percent from a year ago. The January preliminary estimate was revised downward by $1,068 million or about 0.8 percent. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers were little changed from the January level and from a year ago. Inventories of nondurable goods wholesalers were little changed from the January level and were up 6.0 percent from February 1985. Based on seasonally adjusted data, comparisons with previous month inventory levels showed mixed results for both durable and nondurable goods detailed categories.

Stock/Sales Ratio. The February stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.20, up from the January ratio of 1.18 and above the year ago ratio of 1.17.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



The *Monthly Wholesale Trade* Report for March is scheduled to be released May 7, 1986, at 10:00 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to **Shirley Roberts**, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-3916 or 763-3917.

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Table 1A. Adjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986		1985										
		Jan.	Feb.P	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Sales, total	115,648	113,235	114,022	113,759	116,588	116,712	111,073	113,301	115,146	114,344	113,675	115,762	116,852
50	Durable goods	53,428	52,852	50,966	52,031	52,284	53,575	51,004	50,998	52,538	52,249	52,469	53,408	53,948
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,318	11,383	10,655	10,821	10,972	11,667	10,979	11,299	11,518	11,142	11,383	11,726	11,700
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,983	1,994	1,846	1,774	1,841	1,902	1,958	2,090	2,037	1,981	1,978	2,044	2,083
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,046	3,974	3,601	3,784	3,853	3,807	3,743	3,756	3,816	3,834	3,823	3,900	3,814
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,919	4,995	5,033	5,065	5,040	5,067	4,925	4,965	5,061	5,305	5,082	4,886	4,884
506	Electrical goods	7,716	7,686	7,479	7,400	7,196	7,232	6,976	7,143	7,222	7,481	7,720	7,771	7,799
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,440	3,583	3,407	3,562	3,540	3,320	3,164	3,285	3,277	3,462	3,643	3,518
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,541	13,437	13,521	14,172	13,860	13,659	13,123	13,283	13,575	13,387	13,451	13,479	13,830
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,723	4,625	4,134	4,608	4,890	4,849	4,376	4,187	4,670	4,434	4,230	4,555	4,721
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	60,383	63,056	61,728	64,304	63,137	60,069	62,303	62,608	62,095	61,206	62,354	62,904
511	Paper & paper products	3,197	3,116	2,899	2,929	2,972	2,914	2,927	2,934	2,969	2,910	3,007	3,015	3,080
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,276	2,263	2,082	2,096	2,150	2,131	2,045	2,257	2,203	2,179	2,215	2,214	2,211
514	Groceries & related products	19,104	18,344	17,801	17,910	17,738	17,918	17,677	18,135	17,938	17,974	18,124	18,676	18,808
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,296	7,164	9,169	8,213	8,771	8,434	7,696	7,081	6,971	6,814	6,830	7,464	7,418
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,273	3,313	3,198	3,194	3,300	3,271	3,208	3,345	3,452	3,859	2,917	3,201	3,313
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,743	9,026	8,565	8,729	8,912	8,575	8,461	9,098	9,202	9,026	8,448	7,809	9,472
	Inventories, total	136,624	136,551	132,917	133,267	133,203	133,667	134,931	134,949	134,869	134,410	134,810	134,831	135,940
50	Durable goods	87,815	88,037	87,169	87,015	87,275	87,232	87,446	87,282	87,091	86,688	87,037	87,281	87,246
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,975	15,135	15,197	15,472	15,539	15,918	15,647	15,579	15,650	15,645	15,532	16,023
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,376	3,116	2,982	2,923	2,917	3,002	3,051	3,352	3,278	3,230	3,357	3,282	3,368
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,876	8,862	9,169	9,132	8,988	8,671	8,599	8,544	8,548	8,555	8,425	8,387	8,655
506	Electrical goods	12,511	12,607	12,789	12,746	12,964	12,832	12,874	12,884	12,927	12,837	12,737	12,680	12,586
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,752	5,870	5,889	6,023	6,106	6,261	6,069	6,038	5,920	5,852	5,871	5,836	5,775
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,012	30,183	30,035	29,857	29,541	29,518	29,423	29,497	29,785	29,495	29,713	30,469	30,005
51	Nondurable goods	48,809	48,514	45,748	46,252	45,928	46,435	47,485	47,667	47,778	47,722	47,773	47,550	48,694
511	Paper & paper products	3,154	3,121	2,882	2,894	3,007	2,889	2,950	2,900	2,974	2,981	3,016	3,010	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,611	10,501	9,223	9,309	9,430	9,551	9,666	9,605	9,743	9,658	9,970	9,913	10,265
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,148	7,160	6,836	6,881	6,597	6,680	6,791	6,767	6,591	6,839	6,902	6,807	7,150
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,652	3,780	3,358	3,444	3,489	3,494	3,596	3,474	3,595	3,599	3,582	3,566	3,632
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,408	9,190	8,866	9,038	8,769	8,961	9,624	9,404	9,486	9,674	9,582	9,586	9,470
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.18	1.21	1.17	1.17	1.14	1.15	1.21	1.19	1.17	1.18	1.19	1.16	1.16
50	Durable goods	1.64	1.67	1.71	1.67	1.67	1.63	1.71	1.71	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.63	1.62
501	Motor vehicles & auto equip.	1.42	1.40	1.42	1.40	1.41	1.33	1.45	1.38	1.35	1.40	1.37	1.32	1.37
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.70	1.56	1.62	1.65	1.58	1.58	1.56	1.60	1.61	1.63	1.70	1.61	1.62
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.80	1.77	1.82	1.80	1.78	1.71	1.75	1.72	1.69	1.61	1.66	1.72	1.77
506	Electrical goods	1.62	1.64	1.71	1.72	1.80	1.77	1.85	1.80	1.79	1.72	1.65	1.63	1.61
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.66	1.71	1.64	1.77	1.71	1.77	1.83	1.91	1.80	1.79	1.70	1.60	1.64
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.25	2.22	2.11	2.13	2.16	2.24	2.22	2.19	2.20	2.21	2.26	2.17
51	Nondurable goods	.78	.80	.73	.75	.71	.74	.79	.77	.76	.77	.78	.76	.77
511	Paper & paper products	.99	1.00	.99	.99	1.01	.99	1.01	.99	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	.56	.57	.52	.52	.53	.53	.55	.53	.54	.54	.55	.53	.55
515	Farm-product raw materials	.98	1.00	.75	.84	.75	.79	.88	.96	.95	1.00	1.01	.91	.96
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.14	1.05	1.08	1.06	1.07	1.12	1.04	1.04	.93	1.23	1.11	1.10
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.08	1.02	1.04	1.04	.98	1.05	1.14	1.03	1.03	1.07	1.13	1.23	1.00

PPreliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 1B. **Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985**

(Data not adjusted for seasonal variation or trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986		1985										Total 2 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.P	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1986	1985
	Sales, total	112,335	102,228	103,209	115,647	117,050	123,536	110,634	113,211	116,066	111,775	121,011	113,874	116,941	214,563	214,181
50	Durable goods	50,115	47,038	45,513	52,499	53,068	55,664	51,106	51,406	54,272	52,040	57,296	52,393	52,653	97,153	94,352
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	11,092	9,994	9,408	11,027	11,301	12,507	11,418	11,448	11,495	10,128	12,294	11,562	11,419	21,086	19,975
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,781	1,781	1,654	1,776	1,924	1,982	1,952	2,025	2,049	1,999	2,293	2,046	1,975	3,562	3,300
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,455	3,159	2,870	3,466	3,853	4,180	3,990	4,090	4,281	4,060	4,354	3,857	3,276	6,614	5,853
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,904	4,670	4,716	5,414	5,171	5,462	4,925	4,791	5,188	5,347	5,163	4,417	4,694	9,574	9,941
506	Electrical goods	7,014	6,864	6,686	7,319	6,879	7,001	7,095	7,257	7,468	7,780	8,538	7,911	8,025	13,878	13,731
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,291	3,010	3,128	3,216	3,594	3,671	3,350	3,395	3,512	3,284	3,829	3,563	3,307	6,301	6,373
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,647	12,187	12,277	14,455	14,262	14,574	13,228	13,057	13,779	13,307	14,339	12,819	13,968	24,834	25,098
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,614	4,139	3,696	4,580	4,866	5,091	3,921	3,994	5,056	4,580	4,772	4,591	4,551	8,753	7,962
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	55,190	57,696	63,148	63,982	67,872	59,528	61,805	61,794	59,735	63,715	61,481	64,288	117,410	119,829
511	Paper & paper products	3,226	2,895	2,696	2,944	2,963	2,998	2,842	2,899	3,115	2,858	3,245	2,952	2,991	6,121	5,562
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,337	2,082	1,915	2,067	2,212	2,174	2,018	2,171	2,194	2,194	2,403	2,130	2,207	4,419	4,053
514	Groceries & related products	18,913	16,840	16,359	17,713	17,649	19,136	17,571	18,625	18,369	17,543	18,758	18,284	18,601	35,753	33,844
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,872	6,813	8,747	8,878	8,420	9,362	6,888	6,316	6,399	5,799	7,049	8,210	8,256	14,685	19,187
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,638	2,561	2,472	2,913	3,175	3,621	3,256	3,690	3,670	3,813	3,109	3,284	3,860	5,199	4,997
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,825	7,735	7,349	8,973	9,589	10,650	8,859	9,143	9,009	8,602	8,473	7,270	9,377	15,560	14,767
	Inventories, total	137,103	137,381	133,675	134,418	134,287	132,425	133,469	132,836	132,424	133,789	136,122	136,376	137,139	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	86,586	87,509	86,646	87,102	87,624	87,058	87,883	87,457	87,178	87,842	87,298	87,019	86,984	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	16,071	15,226	15,273	15,627	15,321	15,870	15,287	14,987	15,932	15,880	15,656	16,311	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,362	3,169	3,033	2,946	2,873	2,981	3,094	3,312	3,308	3,246	3,337	3,239	3,375	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,778	8,773	9,086	9,050	8,754	8,645	8,676	8,655	8,710	8,892	8,349	8,395	8,898	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	12,161	12,216	12,405	12,427	12,899	12,742	12,964	13,180	13,160	13,184	13,055	12,705	12,448	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,637	5,905	5,924	6,131	6,369	6,411	6,069	6,116	5,914	5,770	5,759	5,737	5,590	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,562	29,972	29,825	30,066	29,777	29,666	29,805	29,556	29,725	29,495	29,772	30,134	29,915	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	50,517	49,872	47,029	47,316	46,663	45,367	45,586	45,379	45,246	46,147	48,824	49,357	50,155	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,116	3,115	2,876	2,865	2,974	2,924	2,971	2,923	3,028	2,957	2,983	3,061	3,077	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,388	10,564	9,288	9,290	9,260	9,532	9,808	9,403	9,441	9,610	10,399	10,419	10,275	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	8,864	8,298	7,923	7,542	6,439	5,404	5,229	5,177	5,339	5,998	7,357	8,148	8,759	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,404	3,602	3,193	3,385	3,545	3,515	3,679	3,575	3,591	3,599	3,836	3,808	3,312	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,766	9,870	9,522	10,104	9,655	8,916	9,095	8,924	8,737	9,026	9,237	9,174	9,451	(X)	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.22	1.34	1.30	1.16	1.15	1.07	1.21	1.17	1.14	1.20	1.12	1.20	1.17	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.73	1.86	1.90	1.66	1.65	1.56	1.72	1.70	1.61	1.68	1.52	1.66	1.65	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	1.45	1.61	1.62	1.39	1.38	1.22	1.39	1.34	1.30	1.57	1.29	1.35	1.43	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.89	1.78	1.83	1.66	1.49	1.50	1.59	1.64	1.61	1.62	1.46	1.58	1.71	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.79	1.88	1.93	1.67	1.69	1.58	1.76	1.81	1.68	1.63	1.62	1.90	1.85	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	1.73	1.78	1.86	1.70	1.88	1.82	1.83	1.82	1.76	1.69	1.53	1.61	1.55	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.96	1.89	1.91	1.77	1.75	1.81	1.80	1.68	1.76	1.50	1.61	1.69	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.34	2.46	2.43	2.08	2.09	2.04	2.25	2.26	2.16	2.22	2.08	2.35	2.14	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	.81	.90	.82	.75	.73	.67	.77	.73	.73	.77	.77	.80	.78	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	.97	1.08	1.07	.97	1.00	.98	1.06	1.01	.97	1.03	.92	1.04	1.03	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	.55	.63	.57	.52	.52	.50	.55	.50	.51	.55	.55	.57	.55	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.13	1.22	.91	.85	.76	.58	.76	.82	.83	1.03	1.04	.99	1.09	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.29	1.41	1.29	1.16	1.12	.97	1.13	.97	.98	.94	1.23	1.16	.86	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.25	1.28	1.30	1.13	1.01	.84	1.03	.98	.97	1.05	1.09	1.26	1.01	(X)	(X)

PPreliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*
x Cumulative data are not applicable for inventories or stock/sales ratios, cumulative seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. **Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers**

SIC code	Kind of business	Unadjusted					Adjusted[1]			
		Sales			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		Feb. 1986 from Jan. 1986	Feb. 1986 from Feb. 1985	2 months 1986 from 2 months 1985	Feb. 1986 from Jan. 1986	Feb. 1986 from Feb. 1985	Feb. 1986 from Jan. 1986	Feb. 1986 from Feb. 1985	Feb. 1986 from Jan. 1986	Feb. 1986 from Feb. 1985
	Total	-9.0	-1.0	+.2	+.2	+2.8	-2.1	-.7	-.1	+2.7
50	Durable goods	-6.1	+3.4	+3.0	+1.1	+1.0	-1.1	+3.7	+.3	+1.0
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	-9.9	+6.2	+5.6	+.2	+5.5	+.6	+6.8	-.4	+5.6
502	Furniture & home furnishings	.0	+7.7	+7.9	-5.7	+4.5	+.6	+8.0	-7.7	+4.5
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	-8.6	+10.1	+13.0	(S)	(S)	-1.8	+10.4	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	-4.8	-1.0	-3.7	-.1	-3.4	+1.5	-.8	-.2	-3.3
506	Electrical goods	-2.1	+2.7	+1.1	+.5	-1.5	-.4	+2.8	+.8	-1.4
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	-8.5	-3.8	-1.1	+4.8	-.3	-.9	-4.0	+2.1	-.3
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	-3.6	-.7	-1.1	+1.4	+.5	-.8	-.6	+.6	+.5
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	-10.3	+12.0	+9.9	(S)	(S)	-2.1	+11.9	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	-11.3	-4.3	-2.0	-1.3	+6.0	-3.0	-4.2	-.6	+6.0
511	Paper & paper products	-10.3	+7.4	+10.1	.0	+8.3	-2.5	+7.5	-1.0	+8.3
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	-10.9	+8.7	+9.0	(S)	(S)	-.6	+8.7	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	-11.0	+2.9	+5.6	+1.7	+13.7	-4.0	+3.1	-1.0	+13.9
515	Farm-product raw materials	-13.5	-22.1	-23.5	-6.4	+4.7	-1.8	-21.9	+.2	+4.7
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	-2.9	+3.6	+4.0	+5.8	+12.8	+1.2	+3.6	+3.5	+12.6
519	Misc. nondurable goods	-1.2	+5.3	+5.4	+1.1	+3.7	+3.2	+5.4	-2.3	+3.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

[1]Adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972*, and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +0.6 percent to -0.5 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +1.1 percent to -0.8 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.4 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarily, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Classification Differences Between Monthly Survey and 1977 and 1982 Censuses of Wholesale Trade

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

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[2]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program,* U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series,* Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. **Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories**

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.9	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

Table 4. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of business	1985											1986		
		Feb.[r]	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.[r]	Feb.[r]	Mar.
	Sales,[1] total	.905	1.016	1.000	1.059	1.004	.998	1.006	.977	1.063	.984	1.002	.976	.903	1.021
50	Durable goods	.893	1.009	1.015	1.039	1.002	1.008	1.033	.996	1.092	.981	.976	.938	.890	1.018
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	.883	1.019	1.030	1.072	1.040	1.013	.998	.909	1.080	.986	.976	.980	.878	1.019
502	Furniture & home furnishings	.896	1.001	1.045	1.042	.997	.969	1.006	1.009	1.159	1.001	.948	.898	.893	.999
503	Lumber & other construction mat	.797	.916	1.000	1.098	1.066	1.089	1.122	1.059	1.139	.989	.859	.854	.795	.925
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	.937	1.069	1.026	1.078	1.000	.965	1.025	1.008	1.016	.904	.961	.997	.935	1.072
506	Electrical goods	.894	.989	.956	.968	1.017	1.016	1.034	1.040	1.106	1.018	1.029	.909	.893	.995
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	.873	.944	1.009	1.037	1.009	1.073	1.069	1.002	1.106	.978	.940	.948	.875	.954
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	.908	1.020	1.029	1.067	1.008	.983	1.015	.994	1.066	.951	1.010	.934	.907	1.020
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	.894	.994	.995	1.050	.896	.954	1.083	1.033	1.128	1.008	.964	.977	.895	1.028
51	Nondurable goods	.915	1.023	.995	1.075	.991	.992	.987	.962	1.041	.986	1.022	1.000	.914	1.026
511	Paper & paper products	.930	1.005	.997	1.029	.971	.988	1.049	.982	1.079	.979	.971	1.009	.929	.999
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	.920	.986	1.029	1.020	.987	.962	.996	1.007	1.085	.962	.998	1.027	.920	.987
514	Groceries & related products	.919	.989	.995	1.068	.994	1.027	1.024	.976	1.035	.979	.989	.990	.918	.992
515	Farm-product raw materials	.954	1.081	.960	1.110	.895	.892	.918	.851	1.032	1.100	1.113	1.079	.951	1.096
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	.773	.912	.962	1.107	1.015	1.103	1.063	.988	1.066	1.026	1.165	.806	.773	.909
519	Misc. nondurable goods	.858	1.028	1.076	1.242	1.047	1.005	.979	.953	1.003	.931	.990	.895	.857	1.033
	Inventories,[1] total	1.006	1.010	1.009	.990	.988	.985	.982	.995	1.010	1.012	1.008	1.003	1.006	1.009
50	Durable goods	.994	1.001	1.004	.998	1.005	1.002	1.001	1.011	1.003	.997	.997	.986	.994	1.001
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.006	1.005	1.010	.986	.997	.977	.962	1.018	1.015	1.008	1.018	1.000	1.006	1.005
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.017	1.008	.985	.993	1.014	.988	1.009	1.005	.994	.987	1.002	.996	1.017	1.006
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	.991	.991	.974	.997	1.009	1.013	1.019	1.016	.991	1.001	1.005	.989	.990	.992
506	Electrical goods	.970	.975	.995	.993	1.007	1.023	1.018	1.027	1.025	1.002	.989	.972	.969	.974
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip	1.006	1.018	1.043	1.024	1.000	1.013	.999	.986	.981	.983	.968	.980	1.006	1.018
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	.993	1.007	1.008	1.005	1.013	1.002	.998	1.000	1.002	.989	.997	.985	.993	1.007
51	Nondurable goods	1.028	1.023	1.016	.977	.960	.952	.947	.967	1.022	1.038	1.030	1.035	1.028	1.023
511	Paper & paper products	.998	.990	.989	1.012	1.007	1.008	1.018	.992	.989	1.017	.992	.988	.998	.990
514	Groceries & related products	1.007	.998	.982	.998	.994	.979	.969	.995	1.043	1.051	1.001	.979	1.006	.997
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.159	1.096	.976	.809	.770	.765	.810	.877	1.066	1.197	1.225	1.240	1.159	1.097
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	.951	.983	1.016	1.006	1.023	1.029	.999	1.000	1.071	1.068	.912	.932	.953	.981
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.074	1.118	1.101	.995	.945	.949	.921	.933	.964	.957	.998	1.038	1.074	1.118

[r]Revised.

[1]Adjusted sales and inventory data shown in table 1A are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

NOTE: Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some groups not shown separately. The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through December 1985.

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Monthly Wholesale Trade

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

Sales and Inventories

March 1986

Issued May 1986
BW-86-03

Sales March 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were $112.3 billion, down 1.0 percent from the revised February level of $113.4 billion and were little change from a year ago. This is the third consecutive downward month-to-month percent change. The February preliminary estimate was revised upward by $145 million or about 0.1 percent. March sales of durable goods were down 1.8 percent from February and were little changed from a year ago. March sales of nondurable goods were little changed from February and were little changed from March 1985.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $137.0 billion at the end of March, little changed from the revised February level and up 2.9 percent from a year ago. The February preliminary estimate was revised upward by $10 million or about 0.01 percent. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers were little changed from the February level and from a year ago. Nondurable goods wholesalers were little changed from the February level and increased 5.3 percent from a year ago..

Stock/Sales Ratio. The March stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.22, up from the February ratio of 1.20 and above the year ago ratio of 1.17. Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

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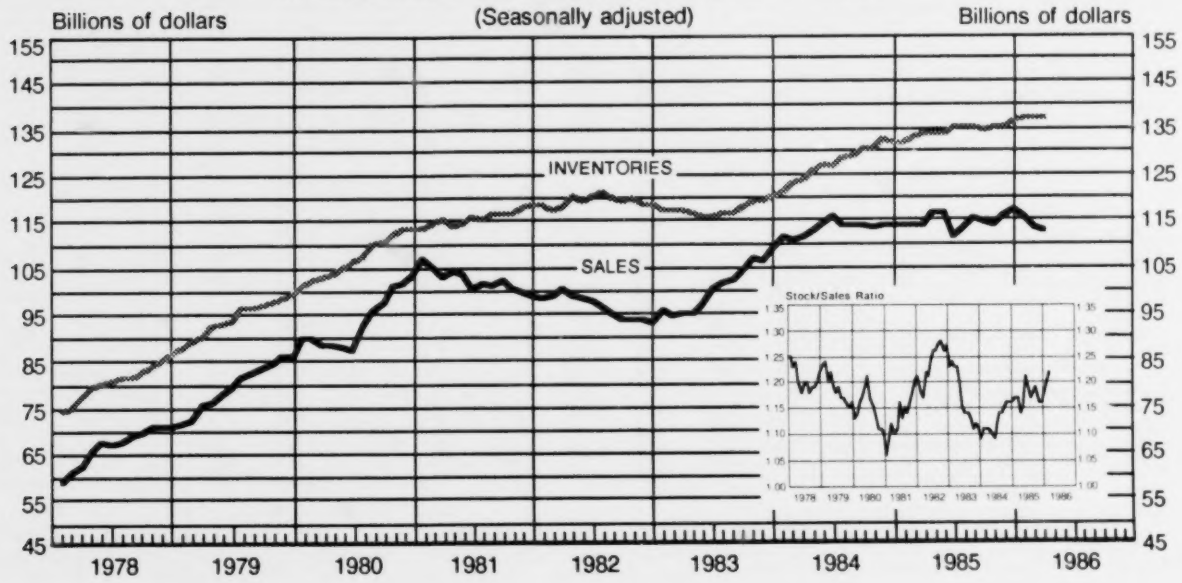
Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



The *Monthly Wholesale Trade* Report for April is scheduled to be released June 9, 1986, at 10:00 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to **Shirley Roberts**, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-3916 or 763-3917.

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Table 1A. Adjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986			1985									
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.[p]	Mar.[r]	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Sales, total	115,648	113,380	112,278	114,044	116,588	116,712	111,073	113,301	115,146	114,344	113,675	115,762	116,852
50	Durable goods	53,428	52,994	52,053	52,134	52,284	53,575	51,004	50,998	52,538	52,249	52,469	53,408	53,948
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,318	11,398	11,233	10,907	10,972	11,667	10,979	11,299	11,518	11,142	11,383	11,726	11,700
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,983	1,959	1,864	1,807	1,841	1,902	1,958	2,090	2,037	1,981	1,978	2,044	2,083
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,046	4,065	4,029	3,780	3,853	3,807	3,743	3,756	3,816	3,834	3,823	3,900	3,814
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,919	4,936	4,582	5,108	5,040	5,067	4,925	4,965	5,061	5,305	5,082	4,886	4,884
506	Electrical goods	7,716	7,773	7,661	7,415	7,196	7,232	6,976	7,143	7,222	7,481	7,720	7,771	7,799
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,488	3,448	3,400	3,562	3,540	3,320	3,164	3,285	3,277	3,462	3,643	3,518
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,541	13,442	13,578	14,172	13,860	13,659	13,123	13,283	13,575	13,387	13,451	13,479	13,830
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,723	4,612	4,819	4,598	4,890	4,849	4,376	4,187	4,670	4,434	4,230	4,555	4,721
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	60,386	60,225	61,910	64,304	63,137	60,069	62,303	62,608	62,095	61,206	62,354	62,904
511	Paper & paper products	3,197	3,127	3,185	2,932	2,972	2,914	2,927	2,934	2,969	2,910	3,007	3,015	3,080
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,276	2,238	2,270	2,090	2,150	2,131	2,045	2,257	2,203	2,179	2,215	2,214	2,211
514	Groceries & related products	19,104	18,551	19,053	17,820	17,738	17,918	17,677	18,135	17,938	17,974	18,124	18,676	18,808
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,296	7,109	7,012	8,528	8,771	8,434	7,696	7,081	6,971	6,814	6,830	7,464	7,418
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,273	3,323	3,398	3,198	3,300	3,271	3,208	3,345	3,452	3,859	2,917	3,201	3,313
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,743	9,114	9,483	8,661	8,912	8,575	8,461	9,098	9,202	9,026	8,448	7,809	9,472
	Inventories, total	136,624	136,561	137,019	133,135	133,203	133,667	134,931	134,949	134,869	134,410	134,810	134,831	135,940
50	Durable goods	87,815	88,230	88,375	86,928	87,275	87,232	87,446	87,282	87,091	86,688	87,037	87,281	87,246
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,909	16,102	15,167	15,472	15,539	15,918	15,647	15,579	15,650	15,645	15,532	16,023
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,376	3,147	3,172	2,946	2,917	3,002	3,051	3,352	3,278	3,230	3,357	3,282	3,368
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,876	8,770	8,486	9,169	8,988	8,671	8,599	8,544	8,548	8,555	8,425	8,387	8,655
506	Electrical goods	12,511	12,610	12,747	12,733	12,964	12,832	12,874	12,884	12,927	12,837	12,737	12,680	12,586
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,752	5,859	6,024	6,005	6,106	6,261	6,069	6,038	5,920	5,852	5,871	5,836	5,775
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,012	30,406	30,450	29,798	29,541	29,518	29,423	29,497	29,785	29,495	29,713	30,469	30,005
51	Nondurable goods	48,809	48,331	48,644	46,207	45,928	46,435	47,485	47,667	47,778	47,722	47,773	47,550	48,694
511	Paper & paper products	3,154	3,143	3,231	2,882	3,007	2,889	2,950	2,900	2,974	2,981	3,016	3,010	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,611	10,650	10,925	9,309	9,430	9,551	9,666	9,605	9,743	9,658	9,970	9,913	10,265
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,148	7,001	7,010	6,888	6,597	6,680	6,791	6,767	6,591	6,839	6,902	6,807	7,150
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,652	3,750	3,663	3,465	3,489	3,494	3,596	3,474	3,595	3,599	3,582	3,566	3,632
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,408	9,113	8,897	9,070	8,769	8,961	9,624	9,404	9,486	9,674	9,582	9,586	9,470
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.18	1.20	1.22	1.17	1.14	1.15	1.21	1.19	1.17	1.18	1.19	1.16	1.16
50	Durable goods	1.64	1.66	1.70	1.67	1.67	1.63	1.71	1.71	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.63	1.62
501	Motor vehicles & auto equip.	1.42	1.40	1.43	1.39	1.41	1.33	1.45	1.38	1.35	1.40	1.37	1.32	1.37
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.70	1.61	1.70	1.63	1.58	1.58	1.56	1.60	1.61	1.63	1.70	1.61	1.62
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.80	1.78	1.85	1.80	1.78	1.71	1.75	1.72	1.69	1.61	1.66	1.72	1.77
506	Electrical goods	1.62	1.62	1.66	1.72	1.80	1.77	1.85	1.80	1.79	1.72	1.65	1.63	1.61
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.66	1.68	1.75	1.77	1.71	1.77	1.83	1.91	1.80	1.79	1.70	1.60	1.64
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.26	2.24	2.10	2.13	2.16	2.24	2.22	2.19	2.20	2.21	2.26	2.17
51	Nondurable goods	.78	.80	.81	.75	.71	.74	.79	.77	.76	.77	.78	.76	.77
511	Paper & paper products	.99	1.01	1.01	.98	1.01	.99	1.01	.99	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	.56	.57	.57	.52	.53	.53	.55	.53	.54	.54	.55	.53	.55
515	Farm-product raw materials	.98	.98	1.00	.81	.75	.79	.88	.96	.95	1.00	1.01	.91	.96
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.13	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.07	1.12	1.04	1.04	.93	1.23	1.11	1.10
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.08	1.00	.94	1.05	.98	1.05	1.14	1.03	1.03	1.07	1.13	1.23	1.00

[r]Revised.

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985*.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 1B. Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data not adjusted for seasonal variation or trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986			1985										Total 3 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.[P]	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1986	1985
	Sales, total	112,335	102,577	114,203	115,647	117,050	123,536	110,634	113,211	116,066	111,775	121,011	113,874	116,941	329,115	329,828
50	Durable goods	50,115	47,324	52,834	52,499	53,068	55,664	51,106	51,406	54,272	52,040	57,296	52,393	52,653	150,273	146,851
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	11,092	10,042	11,323	11,027	11,301	12,507	11,418	11,446	11,495	10,128	12,294	11,562	11,419	32,457	31,002
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,781	1,759	1,806	1,776	1,924	1,962	1,952	2,025	2,049	1,999	2,293	2,046	1,975	5,346	5,076
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,455	3,248	3,739	3,466	3,853	4,180	3,990	4,090	4,281	4,060	4,354	3,857	3,276	10,442	9,319
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,904	4,625	4,862	5,414	5,171	5,462	4,925	4,791	5,188	5,347	5,163	4,417	4,694	14,391	15,355
506	Electrical goods	7,014	6,972	7,584	7,319	6,879	7,001	7,095	7,257	7,468	7,780	8,538	7,911	8,025	21,570	21,050
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,291	3,104	3,289	3,216	3,594	3,671	3,350	3,395	3,512	3,284	3,829	3,563	3,307	9,684	9,589
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,647	12,192	13,877	14,455	14,262	14,574	13,228	13,057	13,779	13,307	14,339	12,819	13,968	38,716	39,553
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,614	4,128	4,973	4,580	4,866	5,091	3,921	3,994	5,068	4,580	4,772	4,591	4,551	13,715	12,542
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	55,253	61,369	63,148	63,982	67,872	59,528	61,805	61,794	59,735	63,715	61,481	64,288	178,842	182,977
511	Paper & paper products	3,226	2,911	3,169	2,944	2,963	2,998	2,842	2,899	3,115	2,858	3,245	2,952	2,991	9,306	8,506
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,337	2,057	2,254	2,067	2,212	2,174	2,018	2,171	2,194	2,194	2,403	2,130	2,207	6,648	6,120
514	Groceries & related products	18,913	16,956	18,998	17,713	17,649	19,136	17,571	18,625	18,369	17,543	18,758	18,284	18,601	54,865	51,557
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,872	6,846	7,349	8,878	8,420	9,362	6,888	6,316	6,399	5,799	7,049	8,210	8,256	22,067	28,065
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,638	2,559	3,096	2,913	3,175	3,621	3,256	3,690	3,670	3,813	3,109	3,284	3,860	8,293	7,910
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,825	7,729	9,976	8,973	9,589	10,650	8,859	9,143	9,009	8,602	8,473	7,270	9,377	25,530	23,740
	Inventories, total	137,103	137,385	138,315	134,418	134,287	132,425	133,469	132,836	132,424	133,789	136,122	136,378	137,139	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	86,586	87,701	88,552	87,102	87,624	87,058	87,883	87,457	87,178	87,642	87,298	87,019	86,984	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,989	16,215	15,273	15,627	15,321	15,870	15,287	14,987	15,932	15,880	15,656	16,311	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,362	3,207	3,159	2,946	2,873	2,981	3,094	3,312	3,308	3,246	3,337	3,239	3,375	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,778	8,726	8,376	9,050	8,754	8,645	8,676	8,655	8,710	8,692	8,349	8,395	8,698	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	12,161	12,181	12,416	12,427	12,899	12,742	12,964	13,180	13,160	13,184	13,055	12,705	12,448	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,637	5,898	6,150	6,131	6,389	6,411	6,069	6,116	5,914	5,770	5,759	5,737	5,580	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,562	30,193	30,755	30,066	29,777	29,666	29,805	29,556	29,725	29,495	29,772	30,134	29,915	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	50,517	49,684	49,763	47,316	46,663	45,367	45,586	45,379	45,246	46,147	48,824	49,357	50,155	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,116	3,137	3,212	2,865	2,974	2,924	2,971	2,923	3,028	2,957	2,983	3,061	3,077	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,388	10,735	10,881	9,290	9,260	9,532	9,608	9,403	9,441	9,610	10,399	10,419	10,275	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	8,864	8,100	7,683	7,542	6,439	5,404	5,229	5,177	5,339	5,998	7,357	8,148	8,759	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,404	3,574	3,575	3,385	3,545	3,515	3,679	3,575	3,591	3,599	3,836	3,808	3,312	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,766	9,796	9,920	10,104	9,655	8,916	9,095	8,924	8,737	9,026	9,237	9,174	9,451	(X)	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.22	1.34	1.21	1.16	1.15	1.07	1.21	1.17	1.14	1.20	1.12	1.20	1.17	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.73	1.85	1.68	1.66	1.65	1.56	1.72	1.70	1.61	1.68	1.52	1.66	1.65	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	1.45	1.59	1.43	1.39	1.38	1.22	1.39	1.34	1.30	1.57	1.29	1.35	1.43	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.89	1.82	1.75	1.66	1.49	1.50	1.59	1.64	1.61	1.62	1.46	1.58	1.71	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.79	1.89	1.72	1.67	1.69	1.58	1.76	1.81	1.68	1.63	1.62	1.90	1.85	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	1.73	1.75	1.64	1.70	1.88	1.82	1.83	1.82	1.76	1.69	1.53	1.61	1.55	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.90	1.87	1.91	1.77	1.75	1.81	1.80	1.68	1.76	1.50	1.61	1.69	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.34	2.48	2.22	2.08	2.09	2.04	2.25	2.26	2.16	2.22	2.08	2.35	2.14	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	.81	.90	.81	.75	.73	.67	.77	.73	.73	.77	.77	.80	.78	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	.97	1.08	1.01	.97	1.00	.98	1.05	1.01	.97	1.03	.92	1.04	1.03	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	.55	.63	.57	.52	.52	.50	.55	.50	.51	.55	.55	.57	.55	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.13	1.18	1.05	.85	.76	.58	.76	.82	.83	1.03	1.04	.99	1.06	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.29	1.40	1.15	1.16	1.12	.97	1.13	.97	.98	.94	1.23	1.16	.86	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.25	1.27	.99	1.13	1.01	.84	1.03	.98	.97	1.05	1.09	1.26	1.01	(X)	(X)

[P]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*
x Cumulative data are not applicable for inventories or stock/sales ratios, cumulative seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. **Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers**

SIC code	Kind of business	Unadjusted					Adjusted[1]			
		Sales			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		Mar. 1986 from Feb. 1986	Mar. 1986 from Mar. 1985	3 months 1986 from 3 months 1985	Mar. 1986 from Feb. 1986	Mar. 1986 from Mar. 1985	Mar 1986 from Feb. 1986	Mar. 1986 from Mar. 1985	Mar. 1986 from Feb. 1986	Mar. 1986 from Mar. 1985
	Total	+11.3	-1.2	-.2	+.7	+2.9	-1.0	-1.5	+.3	+2.9
50	Durable goods	+11.6	+.6	+2.3	+1.0	+1.7	-1.8	-.2	+.2	+1.7
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	+12.8	+2.7	+4.7	+1.4	+6.2	-1.4	+3.0	+1.2	+6.2
502	Furniture & home furnishings	+2.7	+1.7	+5.3	-1.5	+7.2	-4.8	+3.2	+.8	+7.7
503	Lumber & other construction mat	+15.1	+7.9	+12.1	(S)	(S)	-.9	+6.6	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	+5.1	-10.2	-6.3	-4.0	-7.4	-7.2	-10.3	-3.2	-7.4
506	Electrical goods	+8.8	+3.6	+2.5	+1.9	-.1	-1.4	+3.3	+1.1	+.1
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	+6.0	+2.3	+1.0	+4.4	+.3	-1.1	+1.4	+2.8	+.3
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	+13.8	-4.0	-2.1	+1.9	+2.3	+1.0	-4.2	+.1	+2.2
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	+20.5	+8.6	+9.4	(S)	(S)	+4.5	+4.8	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	+11.1	-2.8	-2.3	+.2	+5.2	-.3	-2.7	+.6	+5.3
511	Paper & paper products	+8.9	+7.6	+9.4	+2.4	+12.1	+1.9	+8.6	+2.8	+12.1
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	+9.6	+9.0	+8.6	(S)	(S)	+1.4	+8.6	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	+12.0	+7.2	+6.4	+1.4	+17.1	+2.7	+6.9	+2.6	+17.4
515	Farm-product raw materials	+7.3	-17.2	-21.4	-5.1	+1.9	-1.4	-17.8	+.1	+1.8
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	+21.0	+6.3	+4.8	.0	+5.6	+2.3	+6.3	-2.3	+5.7
519	Misc. nondurable goods	+29.1	+11.2	+7.5	+1.3	-1.8	+4.0	+9.5	-2.4	-1.9

S Data do not meet publication standards.

[1]Adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972*, and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +0.6 percent to -0.5 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +0.8 percent to -0.8 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarily, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Classification Differences Between Monthly Survey and 1977 and 1982 Censuses of Wholesale Trade

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

[3]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program,* U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series,* Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.9	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

Table 4. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of business	1985										1986			
		Mar.[r]	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.[r]	Mar.[r]	Apr.
	Sales,[1] total	1.015	1.000	1.059	1.004	.998	1.008	.977	1.063	.984	1.002	.976	.905	1.018	.994
50	Durable goods	1.007	1.015	1.039	1.002	1.008	1.033	.996	1.092	.981	.976	.938	.893	1.015	1.010
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.011	1.030	1.072	1.040	1.013	.998	.909	1.080	.986	.976	.980	.881	1.008	1.031
502	Furniture & home furnishings	.983	1.045	1.042	.997	.969	1.006	1.009	1.159	1.001	.948	.898	.898	.969	1.063
503	Lumber & other construction mat	.917	1.000	1.098	1.066	1.089	1.122	1.059	1.139	.989	.859	.854	.799	.928	1.001
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.060	1.026	1.078	1.000	.965	1.025	1.008	1.016	.904	.961	.997	.937	1.061	1.022
506	Electrical goods	.987	.956	.968	1.017	1.016	1.034	1.040	1.106	1.018	1.029	.909	.897	.990	.966
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	.946	1.009	1.037	1.009	1.073	1.069	1.002	1.106	.978	.940	.948	.890	.954	1.009
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.020	1.029	1.067	1.008	.983	1.015	.994	1.066	.951	1.010	.934	.907	1.022	1.022
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	.996	.995	1.050	.896	.954	1.083	1.033	1.128	1.008	.964	.977	.895	1.032	.966
51	Nondurable goods	1.020	.995	1.075	.991	.992	.987	.962	1.041	.986	1.022	1.000	.915	1.019	.991
511	Paper & paper products	1.004	.997	1.029	.971	.988	1.049	.982	1.079	.979	.971	1.009	.931	.995	.997
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	.989	1.029	1.020	.987	.962	.996	1.007	1.085	.962	.998	1.027	.919	.993	1.032
514	Groceries & related products	.994	.995	1.068	.994	1.027	1.024	.976	1.035	.979	.989	.990	.914	.997	1.003
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.041	.960	1.110	.895	.892	.918	.851	1.032	1.100	1.113	1.079	.963	1.048	.933
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	.911	.962	1.107	1.015	1.103	1.063	.988	1.066	1.026	1.165	.806	.770	.911	.964
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.036	1.076	1.242	1.047	1.005	.979	.953	1.003	.931	.990	.895	.848	1.052	1.037
	Inventories,[1] total	1.010	1.009	.990	.988	.985	.982	.995	1.010	1.012	1.008	1.003	1.006	1.009	1.009
50	Durable goods	1.002	1.004	.998	1.005	1.002	1.001	1.011	1.003	.997	.997	.986	.994	1.002	1.003
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.007	1.010	.986	.997	.977	.962	1.018	1.015	1.008	1.018	1.000	1.005	1.007	1.011
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.000	.985	.993	1.014	.988	1.009	1.005	.994	.987	1.002	.996	1.019	.996	.983
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	.987	.974	.997	1.009	1.013	1.019	1.016	.991	1.001	1.005	.989	.995	.987	.974
506	Electrical goods	.976	.995	.993	1.007	1.023	1.018	1.027	1.025	1.002	.989	.972	.966	.974	.995
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip	1.021	1.043	1.024	1.000	1.013	.999	.986	.981	.983	.968	.980	1.005	1.021	1.043
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.009	1.008	1.005	1.013	1.002	.998	1.000	1.002	.989	.997	.985	.993	1.010	1.008
51	Nondurable goods	1.024	1.016	.977	.960	.952	.947	.967	1.022	1.038	1.030	1.035	1.028	1.023	1.017
511	Paper & paper products	.994	.989	1.012	1.007	1.008	1.018	.992	.989	1.017	.992	.988	.998	.994	.989
514	Groceries & related products	.998	.982	.998	.994	.979	.969	.995	1.043	1.051	1.001	.979	1.008	.996	.982
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.095	.976	.809	.770	.765	.810	.877	1.066	1.197	1.225	1.240	1.157	1.096	.977
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	.977	1.016	1.006	1.023	1.029	.999	1.000	1.071	1.068	.912	.932	.953	.976	1.018
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.114	1.101	.995	.945	.849	.921	.933	.964	.957	.998	1.038	1.075	1.115	1.101

[r]Revised.

[1]Adjusted sales and inventory data shown in table 1A are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

NOTE: Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some groups not shown separately. The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through December 1985.

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86-04

Monthly Wholesale Trade

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

Sales and Inventories

April 1986

Issued June 1986
BW-86-04

Sales. April 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were $114.2 billion, up 1.6 percent from the revised March level of $112.5 billion and little changed from a year ago. The March preliminary estimate was revised upward by $217 million or about 0.2 percent. April sales of durable goods increased 4.0 percent from March and were 5.4 percent above a year ago. The largest dollar volume increase in durable goods was in the sales of motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies which was up 3.8 percent to $11,854 million. Miscellaneous durable goods increased 10.8 percent to $5,426 million. April sales of nondurable goods were little changed from March and were down 6.4 percent from April 1985.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $138.0 billion at the end of April, showing some evidence of an increase from the revised March level and up 3.8 percent from a year ago. The March preliminary estimate was revised upward by $37 million or about 0.03 percent. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers increased 1.6 percent from the March level and were 3.3 percent above a year ago. Inventories of nondurable goods wholesalers showed some evidence of a decrease from the March level but were up 4.8 percent from April 1985.

Stock/Sales Ratio. The April stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.21, down from the March ratio of 1.22 and above the year ago ratio of 1.15.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

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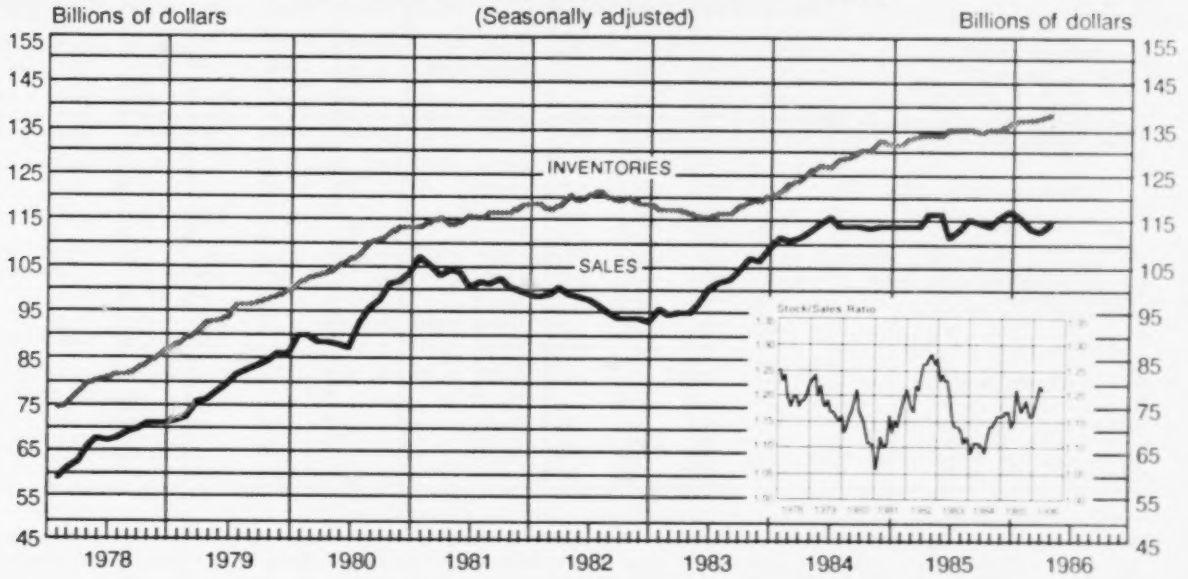
Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



The *Monthly Wholesale Trade* Report for May is scheduled to be released July 9, 1986, at 10:00 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to **Shirley Roberts**, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-3916 or 763-3917.

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Table 1A. Adjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986				1985								
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.[p]	Apr.[r]	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Sales, total	115,648	113,380	112,495	114,240	115,450	116,712	111,073	113,301	115,146	114,344	113,675	115,762	116,852
50	Durable goods	53,428	52,994	52,674	54,805	51,976	53,575	51,004	50,996	52,538	52,249	52,469	53,408	53,948
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,318	11,398	11,416	11,854	10,877	11,667	10,979	11,299	11,518	11,142	11,383	11,726	11,700
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,983	1,959	1,942	1,916	1,846	1,902	1,958	2,090	2,037	1,981	1,978	2,044	2,083
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,046	4,065	3,975	4,296	3,819	3,807	3,743	3,756	3,816	3,834	3,823	3,900	3,814
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,919	4,936	4,624	4,618	5,055	5,067	4,925	4,965	5,061	5,305	5,082	4,886	4,884
506	Electrical goods	7,716	7,773	7,764	7,710	7,211	7,232	6,976	7,143	7,222	7,481	7,720	7,771	7,799
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,488	3,421	3,457	3,500	3,540	3,320	3,164	3,285	3,277	3,462	3,643	3,518
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,541	13,442	13,662	13,943	13,648	13,659	13,123	13,283	13,575	13,387	13,451	13,479	13,830
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,723	4,612	4,898	5,426	4,711	4,849	4,376	4,187	4,670	4,434	4,230	4,555	4,721
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	60,386	59,821	59,435	63,474	63,137	60,069	62,303	62,608	62,095	61,206	62,354	62,904
511	Paper & paper products	3,197	3,127	3,164	3,213	2,957	2,914	2,927	2,934	2,969	2,910	3,007	3,015	3,080
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,276	2,238	2,289	2,313	2,137	2,131	2,045	2,257	2,203	2,179	2,215	2,214	2,211
514	Groceries & related products	19,104	18,551	18,951	18,854	17,667	17,918	17,677	18,135	17,938	17,974	18,124	18,676	18,808
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,296	7,109	7,018	7,082	8,663	8,434	7,696	7,081	6,971	6,814	6,830	7,464	7,418
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,273	3,323	3,411	3,395	3,294	3,271	3,208	3,345	3,452	3,859	2,917	3,201	3,313
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,743	9,114	9,361	9,634	8,830	8,575	8,461	9,098	9,202	9,026	8,448	7,809	9,472
	Inventories, total	136,624	136,561	137,056	138,013	132,984	133,667	134,931	134,949	134,869	134,410	134,810	134,831	135,940
50	Durable goods	87,815	88,230	88,521	89,945	87,101	87,232	87,446	87,282	87,091	86,688	87,037	87,281	87,246
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,909	16,335	16,596	15,396	15,539	15,918	15,647	15,579	15,650	15,645	15,532	16,023
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,376	3,147	3,208	3,208	2,920	3,002	3,051	3,352	3,278	3,230	3,357	3,282	3,368
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,876	8,770	8,400	8,729	8,978	8,671	8,599	8,544	8,548	8,555	8,425	8,387	8,655
506	Electrical goods	12,511	12,610	12,834	13,171	12,912	12,832	12,874	12,884	12,927	12,837	12,737	12,680	12,586
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,752	5,859	5,915	5,794	6,118	6,261	6,069	6,038	5,920	5,852	5,871	5,836	5,775
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,012	30,406	30,273	30,591	29,541	29,518	29,423	29,497	29,785	29,495	29,713	30,469	30,006
51	Nondurable goods	48,809	48,331	48,535	48,068	45,883	46,435	47,485	47,667	47,778	47,722	47,773	47,550	48,694
511	Paper & paper products	3,154	3,143	3,188	3,191	3,001	2,889	2,950	2,900	2,974	2,981	3,016	3,010	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,611	10,650	10,800	11,011	9,391	9,551	9,666	9,605	9,743	9,658	9,970	9,913	10,265
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,148	7,001	7,096	7,281	6,517	6,680	6,791	6,767	6,591	6,839	6,902	6,807	7,150
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,652	3,750	3,718	3,735	3,475	3,494	3,596	3,474	3,595	3,599	3,582	3,566	3,632
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,408	9,113	9,004	8,923	8,801	8,961	9,624	9,404	9,466	9,674	9,582	9,586	9,470
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.18	1.20	1.22	1.21	1.15	1.15	1.21	1.19	1.17	1.18	1.19	1.16	1.16
50	Durable goods	1.64	1.66	1.68	1.64	1.68	1.63	1.71	1.71	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.63	1.62
501	Motor vehicles & auto equip.	1.42	1.40	1.43	1.40	1.42	1.33	1.45	1.38	1.35	1.40	1.37	1.32	1.37
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.70	1.61	1.65	1.67	1.58	1.58	1.56	1.60	1.61	1.63	1.70	1.61	1.62
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.80	1.78	1.82	1.89	1.78	1.71	1.75	1.72	1.69	1.61	1.66	1.72	1.77
506	Electrical goods	1.62	1.62	1.65	1.71	1.79	1.77	1.85	1.80	1.79	1.72	1.65	1.63	1.61
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.66	1.68	1.73	1.68	1.75	1.77	1.83	1.91	1.80	1.79	1.70	1.60	1.64
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.26	2.22	2.19	2.16	2.16	2.24	2.22	2.19	2.20	2.21	2.26	2.17
51	Nondurable goods	.78	.80	.81	.81	.72	.74	.79	.77	.76	.77	.78	.76	.77
511	Paper & paper products	.99	1.01	1.01	.99	1.01	.99	1.01	.99	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	.56	.57	.57	.58	.53	.53	.55	.53	.54	.54	.55	.53	.55
515	Farm-product raw materials	.98	.98	1.01	1.03	.75	.79	.88	.96	.95	1.00	1.01	.91	.96
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.13	1.09	1.10	1.05	1.07	1.12	1.04	1.04	.93	1.23	1.11	1.10
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.08	1.00	.96	.93	1.00	1.05	1.14	1.03	1.03	1.07	1.13	1.23	1.00

[r]Revised.

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985*.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 1B. Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data not adjusted for seasonal variation or trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986				1985									Total 4 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.[P]	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1986	1985
	Sales, total	112,335	102,577	113,966	115,679	117,050	123,536	110,634	113,211	116,066	111,775	121,011	113,874	116,941	444,577	446,878
50	Durable goods	50,115	47,324	53,148	56,066	53,068	55,664	51,106	51,406	54,272	52,040	57,296	52,393	52,653	206,653	199,919
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	11,092	10,042	11,484	12,423	11,301	12,507	11,418	11,446	11,495	10,128	12,294	11,562	11,419	45,041	42,303
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,781	1,759	1,909	2,031	1,924	1,982	1,952	2,025	2,049	1,999	2,293	2,046	1,975	7,480	7,000
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,455	3,248	3,637	4,369	3,853	4,180	3,990	4,090	4,281	4,050	4,354	3,857	3,276	14,709	13,172
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,904	4,625	4,886	4,724	5,171	5,462	4,925	4,791	5,188	5,347	5,163	4,417	4,694	19,141	20,526
506	Electrical goods	7,014	6,972	7,717	7,402	6,979	7,001	7,086	7,257	7,468	7,780	8,538	7,911	8,025	29,105	27,929
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,291	3,104	3,253	3,584	3,594	3,671	3,350	3,395	3,512	3,284	3,829	3,563	3,307	13,212	13,183
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,647	12,192	13,881	14,529	14,262	14,574	13,228	13,057	13,779	13,307	14,339	12,819	13,968	53,249	53,815
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,614	4,128	4,986	5,524	4,866	5,091	3,921	3,994	5,058	4,580	4,772	4,591	4,551	19,752	17,408
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	55,253	60,838	59,613	63,982	67,872	59,528	61,805	61,794	59,735	63,715	61,481	64,288	237,924	246,959
511	Paper & paper products	3,226	2,911	3,139	3,229	2,983	2,998	2,842	2,899	3,115	2,858	3,245	2,952	2,991	12,505	11,469
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,337	2,057	2,266	2,401	2,212	2,174	2,018	2,171	2,194	2,194	2,403	2,130	2,207	9,061	8,332
514	Groceries & related products	18,913	16,956	18,894	18,986	17,649	19,136	17,571	18,625	18,369	17,543	18,758	18,284	18,601	73,749	69,206
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,872	6,846	7,404	6,622	8,420	9,362	6,888	6,316	6,399	5,799	7,049	8,210	8,256	28,744	36,485
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,638	2,559	3,111	3,286	3,175	3,621	3,256	3,690	3,670	3,813	3,109	3,284	3,860	11,594	11,085
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,825	7,729	9,735	10,173	9,589	10,650	8,859	9,143	9,009	8,602	8,473	7,270	9,377	35,462	33,329
	Inventories, total	137,103	137,386	138,407	139,260	134,287	132,425	133,469	132,836	132,424	133,789	136,122	136,376	137,139	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	86,586	87,701	88,610	90,395	87,624	87,058	87,883	87,457	87,178	87,642	87,298	87,019	86,984	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,989	16,466	16,828	15,627	15,321	15,870	15,287	14,987	15,932	15,880	15,656	16,311	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,362	3,207	3,202	3,153	2,873	2,981	3,094	3,312	3,308	3,246	3,337	3,239	3,375	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,778	8,726	8,333	8,511	8,754	8,645	8,676	8,655	8,710	8,692	8,349	8,395	8,698	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	12,161	12,181	12,478	13,158	12,899	12,742	12,964	13,180	13,160	13,184	13,058	12,708	12,448	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,637	5,888	6,057	6,026	6,369	6,411	6,069	6,116	5,914	5,770	5,759	5,737	5,590	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,562	30,193	30,515	30,775	29,777	29,666	29,805	29,556	29,725	29,495	29,772	30,134	29,915	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	50,517	49,684	49,797	48,865	46,663	45,367	45,586	45,379	45,246	46,147	48,824	49,357	50,155	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,116	3,137	3,169	3,162	2,974	2,924	2,971	2,923	3,028	2,957	2,983	3,061	3,077	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,388	10,735	10,736	10,868	9,260	9,532	9,608	9,403	9,441	9,610	10,399	10,419	10,275	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	8,864	8,100	7,770	7,201	6,439	5,404	5,229	5,177	5,339	5,998	7,357	8,148	8,759	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,404	3,574	3,640	3,821	3,545	3,515	3,679	3,575	3,591	3,599	3,836	3,808	3,312	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,786	9,796	10,087	9,771	9,655	8,916	9,095	8,924	8,737	9,026	9,237	9,174	9,451	(X)	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.22	1.34	1.21	1.20	1.15	1.07	1.21	1.17	1.14	1.20	1.12	1.20	1.17	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.73	1.85	1.67	1.61	1.65	1.56	1.72	1.70	1.61	1.68	1.52	1.66	1.65	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	1.45	1.59	1.43	1.35	1.38	1.22	1.39	1.34	1.30	1.57	1.29	1.35	1.43	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.89	1.82	1.68	1.55	1.49	1.50	1.59	1.64	1.61	1.62	1.46	1.58	1.71	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.79	1.89	1.70	1.80	1.69	1.58	1.76	1.81	1.68	1.63	1.62	1.90	1.85	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	1.73	1.75	1.62	1.78	1.68	1.82	1.83	1.82	1.76	1.69	1.53	1.61	1.55	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.90	1.86	1.69	1.77	1.75	1.81	1.80	1.68	1.76	1.50	1.61	1.69	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.34	2.48	2.20	2.12	2.09	2.04	2.25	2.26	2.16	2.22	2.08	2.35	2.14	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	.81	.90	.82	.82	.73	.67	.77	.73	.73	.77	.77	.80	.78	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	.97	1.08	1.01	.98	1.00	.98	1.05	1.01	.97	1.03	.92	1.04	1.03	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	.55	.63	.57	.57	.52	.50	.55	.50	.51	.55	.55	.57	.55	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.13	1.18	1.05	1.09	.76	.58	.76	.82	.83	1.03	1.04	.99	1.06	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.29	1.40	1.17	1.16	1.12	.97	1.13	.97	.98	.94	1.23	1.16	.86	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.25	1.27	1.03	.96	1.01	.84	1.03	.98	.97	1.05	1.09	1.26	1.01	(X)	(X)

PPreliminary estimates. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*
x Cumulative data are not applicable for inventories or stock/sales ratios, cumulative seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. **Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers**

SIC code	Kind of business	Unadjusted					Adjusted[1]			
		Sales			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		Apr. 1986 from Mar. 1986	Apr. 1986 from Apr. 1985	4 months 1986 from 4 months 1985	Apr. 1986 from Mar. 1986	Apr. 1986 from Apr. 1985	Apr. 1986 from Mar. 1986	Apr. 1986 from Apr. 1985	Apr. 1986 from Mar. 1986	Apr. 1986 from Apr. 1985
	Total	+1.5	-1.2	-.5	+.6	+3.7	+1.6	-1.0	+.7	+3.8
50	Durable goods	+5.5	+5.6	+3.4	+2.0	+3.2	+4.0	+5.4	+1.6	+3.3
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	+8.2	+9.9	+6.5	+2.2	+7.7	+3.6	+9.0	+1.6	+7.8
502	Furniture & home furnishings	+6.4	+5.6	+6.9	-1.5	+9.7	-1.3	+3.8	.0	+9.9
503	Lumber & other construction mat	+20.1	+13.4	+11.7	(S)	(S)	+8.1	+12.5	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	-3.4	-8.6	-6.7	+2.1	-2.8	-.1	-8.6	+3.9	-2.8
506	Electrical goods	-4.1	+7.6	+4.2	+5.5	+2.0	-.7	+6.9	+2.6	+2.0
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	+9.6	-.8	+.2	-.5	-5.4	+1.1	-1.2	-2.0	-5.3
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	+4.7	+1.9	-1.1	+.9	+3.4	+2.1	+2.2	+1.1	+3.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	+10.8	+13.5	+10.6	(S)	(S)	+10.8	+15.2	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	-2.0	-6.8	-3.7	-1.8	+4.8	-.6	-6.4	-1.0	+4.8
511	Paper & paper products	+2.9	+9.0	+9.0	-.2	+6.3	+1.5	+8.7	+.1	+6.3
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	+6.0	+8.5	+8.7	(S)	(S)	+1.0	+8.2	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	+.5	+7.6	+6.6	+1.2	+17.4	-.5	+6.7	+2.0	+17.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	-10.6	-21.4	-21.2	-7.3	+11.8	+.9	-18.3	+2.6	+11.7
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	+5.6	+3.5	+4.6	+5.0	+7.8	-.5	+3.1	+.5	+7.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	+4.5	+6.1	+6.4	-2.9	+1.2	+2.9	+9.1	-.9	+1.4

S Data do not meet publication standards.

[1]Adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972*, and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +0.6 percent to -0.5 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +0.3 percent to -0.8 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.2 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarily, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Classification Differences Between Monthly Survey and 1977 and 1982 Censuses of Wholesale Trade

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

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[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

[3]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program,* U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series,* Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. **Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories**

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.3	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

Table 4. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of business	1985									1986				
		Apr.[r]	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.[r]	Apr.[r]	May
	Sales,[1] total	1.012	1.059	1.004	.998	1.006	.977	1.063	.984	1.002	.976	.905	1.012	1.011	1.044
50	Durable goods	1.021	1.039	1.002	1.008	1.033	.996	1.092	.981	.976	.938	.893	1.009	1.023	1.020
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.039	1.072	1.040	1.013	.998	.909	1.080	.986	.976	.980	.881	1.006	1.048	1.064
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.042	1.042	.997	.969	1.006	1.009	1.159	1.001	.948	.898	.898	.983	1.060	1.018
503	Lumber & other construction mat	1.009	1.098	1.066	1.089	1.122	1.059	1.139	.989	.859	.854	.799	.915	1.017	1.053
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.023	1.078	1.000	.965	1.025	1.008	1.016	.904	.961	.997	.937	1.057	1.023	1.049
506	Electrical goods	.954	.988	1.017	1.016	1.034	1.040	1.106	1.018	1.029	.909	.897	.994	.960	.963
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.027	1.037	1.009	1.073	1.089	1.002	1.106	.978	.940	.948	.890	.951	1.031	1.003
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.045	1.067	1.008	.983	1.015	.994	1.066	.951	1.010	.934	.907	1.016	1.042	1.040
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	1.033	1.050	.896	.954	1.083	1.033	1.128	1.008	.964	.977	.895	1.018	1.018	1.022
51	Nondurable goods	1.008	1.075	.991	.992	.987	.962	1.041	.986	1.022	1.000	.915	1.017	1.003	1.056
511	Paper & paper products	1.002	1.029	.971	.988	1.049	.982	1.079	.979	.971	1.009	.931	.992	1.005	1.007
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	1.035	1.020	.987	.962	.996	1.007	1.085	.962	.998	1.027	.919	.990	1.038	.986
514	Groceries & related products	.999	1.068	.994	1.027	1.024	.976	1.035	.979	.989	.990	.914	.997	1.007	1.051
515	Farm-product raw materials	.972	1.110	.895	.892	.918	.851	1.032	1.100	1.113	1.079	.963	1.055	.935	1.140
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	.964	1.107	1.015	1.103	1.063	.988	1.066	1.026	1.165	.806	.770	.912	.968	1.056
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.086	1.242	1.047	1.005	.979	.953	1.003	.931	.990	.895	.848	1.040	1.056	1.216
	Inventories,[1] total	1.010	.990	.988	.985	.982	.995	1.010	1.012	1.008	1.003	1.006	1.009	1.009	.990
50	Durable goods	1.006	.998	1.005	1.002	1.001	1.011	1.003	.997	.997	.986	.994	1.001	1.005	.998
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.015	.986	.997	.977	.962	1.018	1.015	1.008	1.018	1.000	1.005	1.008	1.014	.986
502	Furniture & home furnishings	.984	.993	1.014	.988	1.009	1.005	.994	.987	1.002	.996	1.019	.998	.983	.990
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	.975	.997	1.009	1.013	1.019	1.016	.991	1.001	1.005	.989	.995	.992	.975	.997
506	Electrical goods	.999	.993	1.007	1.023	1.018	1.027	1.025	1.002	.989	.972	.966	.972	.999	.992
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip	1.041	1.024	1.000	1.013	.999	.986	.981	.983	.968	.980	1.005	1.024	1.040	1.024
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.008	1.005	1.013	1.002	.998	1.000	1.002	.989	.997	.985	.993	1.008	1.006	1.004
51	Nondurable goods	1.017	.977	.960	.952	.947	.967	1.022	1.038	1.030	1.035	1.028	1.026	1.017	.976
511	Paper & paper products	.991	1.012	1.007	1.008	1.018	.992	.989	1.017	.992	.988	.998	.994	.991	1.012
514	Groceries & related products	.986	.998	.994	.979	.969	.995	1.043	1.051	1.001	.979	1.008	.994	.987	1.000
515	Farm-product raw materials	.988	.809	.770	.765	.810	.877	1.066	1.197	1.225	1.240	1.157	1.095	.989	.811
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.020	1.006	1.023	1.029	.999	1.000	1.071	1.068	.912	.932	.953	.979	1.023	1.006
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.097	.995	.945	.949	.921	.933	.964	.957	.998	1.038	1.075	1.118	1.095	.992

[r]Revised.

[1]Adjusted sales and inventory data shown in table 1A are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

NOTE: Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some groups not shown separately. The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through December 1985.

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Monthly Wholesale Trade

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

JUL 25 1986
U. S. GOVT. PUBS.
DEPOSITORY 376

Sales and Inventories

May 1986

Issued July 1986
BW-86-05

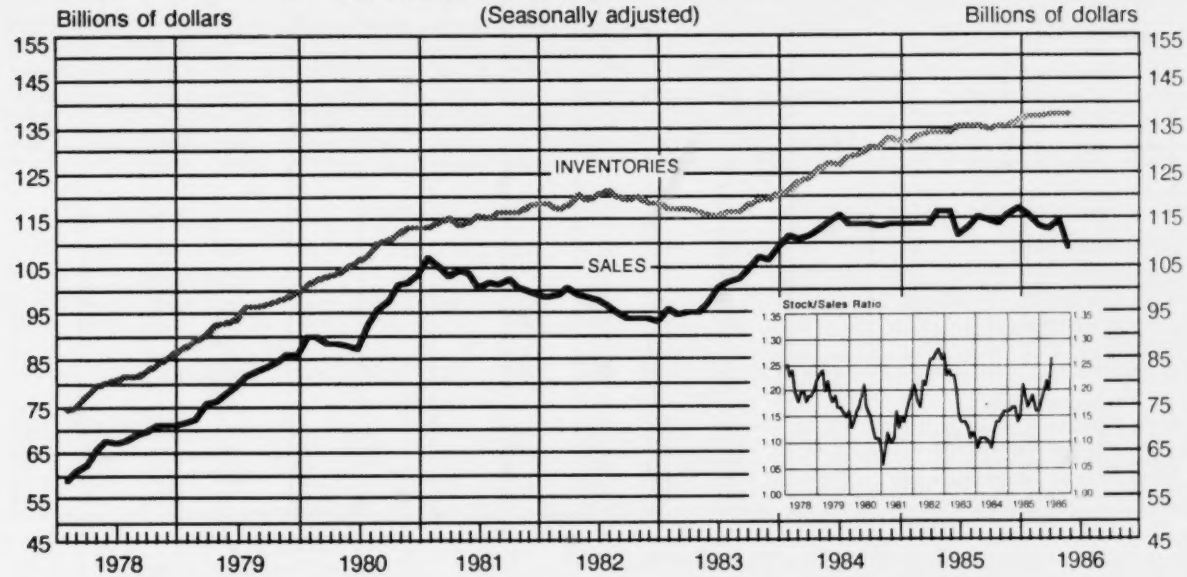
Sales. May 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were $108.8 billion, down 5.1 percent from the revised April level of $114.6 billion and down 6.0 percent from a year ago. The April preliminary estimate was revised upward by $0.4 billion or about 0.3 percent. May sales of durable goods decreased 4.3 percent from April and were little changed from a year ago. The largest dollar volume decrease was in machinery, equipment, and supplies which was down 7.2 percent to $13.1 billion followed by miscellaneous durable goods which was down 9.8 percent to $4.9 billion. May sales of nondurable goods were down 5.8 percent from April and were 11.6 percent below May 1985. Most nondurable categories showed month-to-month decreases. Miscellaneous nondurable goods decreased 17.6 percent to $7.8 billion followed by farm-product raw materials which decreased 9.5 percent to $6.3 billion.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $137.4 billion at the end of May, little changed from the revised April level and 2.9 percent from a year ago. The April preliminary estimate was revised downward by $0.9 billion or about 0.7 percent. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers were up 0.6 percent from the April level and increased 3.1 percent from a year ago. Inventories of nondurable goods wholesalers were little changed from the April level and from a year ago.

Stock/Sales Ratio. The May stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.26, up from the April ratio of 1.20 and above the year ago ratio of 1.15.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



The *Monthly Wholesale Trade* Report for June is scheduled to be released August 7, 1986, at 10:00 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to **Shirley Roberts**, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-3916 or 763-3917.

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Table 1A. Adjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986					1985							
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May[p]	May[r]	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Sales, total	115,648	113,380	112,495	114,608	108,778	115,749	111,073	113,301	115,146	114,344	113,675	115,762	116,852
50	Durable goods	53,428	52,994	52,674	55,317	52,949	52,612	51,004	50,998	52,538	52,249	52,469	53,408	53,948
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,318	11,398	11,416	11,856	11,673	11,360	10,979	11,299	11,518	11,142	11,383	11,726	11,700
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,983	1,959	1,942	1,950	1,989	1,866	1,958	2,090	2,037	1,981	1,978	2,044	2,083
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,046	4,065	3,975	4,229	4,209	3,800	3,743	3,756	3,816	3,834	3,823	3,900	3,814
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,919	4,936	4,624	4,628	4,463	5,119	4,925	4,965	5,061	5,305	5,082	4,886	4,884
506	Electrical goods	7,716	7,773	7,764	7,632	7,546	7,278	6,976	7,143	7,222	7,481	7,720	7,771	7,799
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,488	3,421	3,553	3,664	3,480	3,320	3,164	3,285	3,277	3,462	3,643	3,518
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,541	13,442	13,662	14,154	13,132	13,659	13,123	13,283	13,575	13,387	13,451	13,479	13,830
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,723	4,612	4,898	5,474	4,940	4,862	4,376	4,187	4,670	4,434	4,230	4,555	4,721
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	60,386	59,821	59,291	55,829	63,137	60,069	62,303	62,608	62,095	61,206	62,354	62,904
511	Paper & paper products	3,197	3,127	3,164	3,184	3,049	2,919	2,927	2,934	2,969	2,910	3,007	3,015	3,080
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,276	2,238	2,289	2,265	2,294	2,131	2,045	2,257	2,203	2,179	2,215	2,214	2,211
514	Groceries & related products	19,104	18,551	18,951	18,741	18,379	17,918	17,677	18,135	17,938	17,974	18,124	18,676	18,808
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,296	7,109	7,018	6,985	6,318	8,465	7,696	7,081	6,971	6,814	6,830	7,464	7,418
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,273	3,323	3,411	3,334	3,351	3,280	3,208	3,345	3,452	3,859	2,917	3,201	3,313
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,743	9,114	9,361	9,475	7,808	8,673	8,461	9,098	9,202	9,026	8,448	7,809	9,472
	Inventories, total	136,624	136,561	137,056	137,083	137,361	133,485	134,931	134,949	134,869	134,410	134,810	134,831	135,940
50	Durable goods	87,815	88,230	88,521	89,267	89,822	87,145	87,446	87,282	87,091	86,688	87,037	87,281	87,246
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,909	16,335	16,344	16,633	15,491	15,918	15,647	15,579	15,650	15,645	15,532	16,023
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,376	3,147	3,208	3,183	3,126	3,014	3,051	3,352	3,278	3,230	3,357	3,282	3,368
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,876	8,770	8,400	8,553	8,453	8,662	8,599	8,544	8,548	8,555	8,425	8,387	8,655
506	Electrical goods	12,511	12,610	12,834	13,050	12,546	12,845	12,874	12,884	12,927	12,837	12,737	12,680	12,586
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,752	5,859	5,915	5,876	5,981	6,188	6,069	6,038	5,920	5,852	5,871	5,836	5,775
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,012	30,406	30,273	30,521	30,860	29,489	29,423	29,497	29,785	29,495	29,713	30,469	30,005
51	Nondurable goods	48,809	48,331	48,535	47,816	47,539	46,340	47,485	47,667	47,778	47,722	47,773	47,550	48,694
511	Paper & paper products	3,154	3,143	3,188	3,170	3,074	2,901	2,950	2,900	2,974	2,981	3,016	3,010	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,611	10,650	10,800	10,912	10,572	9,561	9,666	9,605	9,743	9,658	9,970	9,913	10,265
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,148	7,001	7,096	7,127	6,964	6,663	6,791	6,767	6,591	6,839	6,902	6,807	7,150
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,652	3,750	3,718	3,645	3,692	3,498	3,596	3,474	3,595	3,599	3,582	3,566	3,632
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,408	9,113	9,004	8,946	9,139	8,934	9,624	9,404	9,486	9,674	9,582	9,586	9,470
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.18	1.20	1.22	1.20	1.26	1.15	1.21	1.19	1.17	1.18	1.19	1.16	1.16
50	Durable goods	1.64	1.66	1.68	1.61	1.70	1.66	1.71	1.71	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.63	1.62
501	Motor vehicles & auto equip.	1.42	1.40	1.43	1.38	1.42	1.36	1.45	1.38	1.35	1.40	1.37	1.32	1.37
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.70	1.61	1.65	1.63	1.57	1.62	1.56	1.60	1.61	1.63	1.70	1.61	1.62
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.80	1.78	1.82	1.85	1.89	1.69	1.75	1.72	1.69	1.61	1.66	1.72	1.77
506	Electrical goods	1.62	1.62	1.65	1.71	1.66	1.76	1.85	1.80	1.79	1.72	1.65	1.63	1.61
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.66	1.68	1.73	1.65	1.63	1.78	1.83	1.91	1.80	1.79	1.70	1.60	1.64
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.26	2.22	2.16	2.35	2.16	2.24	2.22	2.19	2.20	2.21	2.26	2.17
51	Nondurable goods	.78	.80	.81	.81	.85	.73	.79	.77	.76	.77	.78	.76	.77
511	Paper & paper products	.99	1.01	1.01	1.00	1.01	.99	1.01	.99	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	.56	.57	.57	.58	.58	.53	.55	.53	.54	.54	.55	.53	.55
515	Farm-product raw materials	.98	.98	1.01	1.02	1.10	.79	.88	.96	.95	1.00	1.01	.91	.96
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.13	1.09	1.09	1.10	1.07	1.12	1.04	1.04	.93	1.23	1.11	1.10
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.08	1.00	.96	.94	1.17	1.03	1.14	1.03	1.03	1.07	1.13	1.23	1.00

[r]Revised.

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 1B. Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data not adjusted for seasonal variation or trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986					1985								Total 5 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May[P]	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1986	1985
	Sales, total	112,335	102,577	113,986	115,789	113,863	123,536	110,634	113,211	116,066	111,775	121,011	113,874	116,941	558,550	570,414
50	Durable goods	50,115	47,324	53,148	56,202	54,908	55,664	51,106	51,406	54,272	52,040	57,296	52,393	52,653	261,697	255,583
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	11,092	10,042	11,484	12,366	12,689	12,507	11,418	11,446	11,495	10,128	12,294	11,562	11,419	57,673	54,810
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,781	1,759	1,909	2,065	2,071	1,982	1,952	2,025	2,049	1,999	2,293	2,046	1,975	9,585	8,982
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,455	3,248	3,637	4,280	4,428	4,180	3,990	4,090	4,281	4,060	4,354	3,857	3,276	19,048	17,352
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,904	4,625	4,888	4,767	4,575	5,462	4,925	4,791	5,188	5,347	5,163	4,417	4,694	23,759	25,988
506	Electrical goods	7,014	6,972	7,717	7,319	7,214	7,001	7,095	7,257	7,468	7,780	8,538	7,911	8,025	36,236	34,930
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,291	3,104	3,253	3,635	3,803	3,671	3,350	3,395	3,512	3,284	3,829	3,563	3,307	17,086	16,854
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,647	12,192	13,881	14,664	13,644	14,574	13,228	13,057	13,779	13,307	14,339	12,819	13,968	67,028	68,389
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,614	4,128	4,986	5,611	5,088	5,091	3,921	3,994	5,058	4,580	4,772	4,591	4,551	24,427	22,499
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	55,253	60,838	59,587	58,955	67,872	59,528	61,805	61,794	59,735	63,715	61,481	64,288	296,853	314,831
511	Paper & paper products	3,226	2,911	3,139	3,213	3,052	2,998	2,842	2,899	3,115	2,858	3,245	2,952	2,991	15,541	14,467
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,337	2,057	2,266	2,335	2,269	2,174	2,018	2,171	2,194	2,194	2,403	2,130	2,207	11,264	10,506
514	Groceries & related products	18,913	16,956	18,894	18,910	19,280	19,136	17,571	18,625	18,369	17,543	18,758	18,284	18,601	92,953	88,342
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,872	6,846	7,404	6,608	7,057	9,362	6,888	6,316	6,399	5,799	7,049	8,210	8,256	35,787	45,847
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,638	2,559	3,111	3,221	3,535	3,621	3,256	3,690	3,670	3,813	3,109	3,284	3,860	15,064	14,706
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,825	7,729	9,735	10,081	9,432	10,650	8,859	9,143	9,009	8,602	8,473	7,270	9,377	44,802	43,979
	Inventories, total	137,103	137,385	138,407	138,205	136,230	132,425	133,469	132,836	132,424	133,789	136,122	136,376	137,139	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	86,586	87,701	88,610	89,624	89,642	87,058	87,883	87,457	87,178	87,642	87,298	87,019	86,984	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,989	16,466	16,524	16,433	15,321	15,870	15,287	14,987	15,932	15,880	15,656	16,311	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,362	3,207	3,202	3,126	3,082	2,981	3,094	3,312	3,308	3,246	3,337	3,239	3,375	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,778	8,726	8,333	8,365	8,419	8,645	8,676	8,655	8,710	8,692	8,349	8,395	8,698	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	12,161	12,181	12,475	13,011	12,433	12,742	12,964	13,180	13,160	13,184	13,055	12,705	12,448	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,637	5,888	6,057	6,111	6,202	6,411	6,069	6,116	5,914	5,770	5,759	5,737	5,590	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,562	30,193	30,515	30,674	31,045	29,666	29,805	29,556	29,725	29,495	29,772	30,134	29,915	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	50,517	49,684	49,797	48,581	46,588	45,367	45,586	45,379	45,246	46,147	48,824	49,357	50,155	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,116	3,137	3,169	3,157	3,096	2,924	2,971	2,923	3,028	2,957	2,983	3,061	3,077	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,388	10,735	10,735	10,803	10,540	9,532	9,608	9,403	9,441	9,610	10,399	10,419	10,275	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	8,864	8,100	7,770	7,027	5,662	5,404	5,229	5,177	5,339	5,998	7,357	8,148	8,759	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,404	3,574	3,640	3,718	3,703	3,515	3,679	3,575	3,591	3,599	3,836	3,808	3,312	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,766	9,796	10,067	9,751	9,130	8,916	9,095	8,924	8,737	9,026	9,237	9,174	9,451	(X)	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.22	1.34	1.21	1.19	1.20	1.07	1.21	1.17	1.14	1.20	1.12	1.20	1.17	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.73	1.85	1.67	1.59	1.63	1.56	1.72	1.70	1.61	1.68	1.52	1.66	1.65	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	1.45	1.59	1.43	1.34	1.30	1.22	1.39	1.34	1.30	1.57	1.29	1.35	1.43	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.89	1.82	1.68	1.51	1.49	1.50	1.59	1.64	1.61	1.62	1.46	1.58	1.71	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.79	1.89	1.70	1.75	1.84	1.58	1.76	1.81	1.68	1.63	1.62	1.90	1.85	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	1.73	1.75	1.62	1.78	1.72	1.82	1.83	1.82	1.76	1.69	1.53	1.61	1.55	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.90	1.86	1.68	1.63	1.75	1.81	1.80	1.68	1.76	1.50	1.61	1.69	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.34	2.48	2.20	2.09	2.28	2.04	2.25	2.26	2.16	2.22	2.08	2.35	2.14	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	.81	.90	.82	.82	.79	.67	.77	.73	.73	.77	.77	.80	.78	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	.97	1.08	1.01	.98	1.01	.98	1.05	1.01	.97	1.03	.92	1.04	1.03	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	.55	.63	.57	.57	.55	.50	.55	.50	.51	.55	.55	.57	.55	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.13	1.18	1.05	1.06	.80	.58	.76	.82	.83	1.03	1.04	.99	1.06	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.29	1.40	1.17	1.15	1.05	.97	1.13	.97	.98	.94	1.23	1.16	.86	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.25	1.27	1.03	.97	.97	.84	1.03	.98	.97	1.05	1.09	1.26	1.01	(X)	(X)

[P]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*
x Cumulative data are not applicable for inventories or stock/sales ratios, cumulative seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. **Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers**

SIC code	Kind of business	Unadjusted					Adjusted[1]			
		Sales			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		May 1986 from Apr. 1986	May 1986 from May 1985	5 months 1986 from 5 months 1985	May 1986 from Apr. 1986	May 1986 from May 1985	May 1986 from Apr. 1986	May 1986 from May 1985	May 1986 from Apr. 1986	May 1986 from May 1985
	Total	-1.7	-7.8	-2.1	-1.4	+2.9	-5.1	-6.0	+.2	+2.9
50	Durable goods	-2.3	-1.4	+2.4	.0	+3.0	-4.3	+.6	+.6	+3.1
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	+2.6	+1.5	+5.2	-.6	+7.3	-1.5	+2.8	+1.8	+7.4
502	Furniture & home furnishings	+.3	+4.5	+6.7	-1.4	+3.4	+2.0	+6.6	-1.8	+3.7
503	Lumber & other construction mat	+3.5	+5.9	+9.8	(S)	(S)	-.5	+10.8	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	-4.0	-16.2	-8.6	+.6	-2.6	-3.6	-12.8	-1.2	-2.4
506	Electrical goods	-1.4	+3.0	+3.7	-4.4	-2.4	-1.1	+3.7	-3.9	-2.3
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	+4.6	+3.6	+1.4	+1.5	-3.3	+3.1	+5.3	+1.8	-3.3
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	-7.0	-6.4	-2.0	+1.2	+4.6	-7.2	-3.9	+1.1	+4.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	-9.3	-.1	+8.6	(S)	(S)	-9.8	+1.6	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	-1.1	-13.1	-5.7	-4.1	+2.7	-5.8	-11.6	-.6	+2.6
511	Paper & paper products	-5.0	+1.8	+7.4	-1.9	+5.9	-4.2	+4.5	-3.0	+6.0
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	-2.8	+4.4	+7.2	(S)	(S)	+1.3	+7.6	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	+2.0	+.8	+5.2	-2.4	+10.6	-1.9	+2.6	-3.1	+10.6
515	Farm-product raw materials	+6.8	-24.6	-21.9	-19.4	+4.8	-9.5	-25.4	-2.3	+4.5
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	+9.7	-2.4	+2.4	-.4	+5.3	+.5	+2.2	+1.3	+5.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	-6.4	-11.4	+1.9	-6.4	+2.4	-17.6	-10.0	+2.2	+2.3

S Data do not meet publication standards.

[1]Adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972,* and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +0.6 percent to -0.5 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +0.3 percent to -0.8 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarily, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Classification Differences Between Monthly Survey and 1977 and 1982 Censuses of Wholesale Trade

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

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[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

[3]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program,* U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series,* Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.9	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

Table 4. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of business	1985								1986					
		May[r]	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.[r]	May[r]	June
	Sales,[1] total	1.067	1.004	.998	1.006	.977	1.063	.984	1.002	.976	.905	1.012	1.008	1.045	1.027
50	Durable goods	1.058	1.002	1.008	1.033	.996	1.092	.981	.976	.938	.893	1.009	1.016	1.037	1.025
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.101	1.040	1.013	.998	.909	1.080	.986	.976	.980	.881	1.006	1.043	1.087	1.046
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.062	.997	.969	1.006	1.009	1.159	1.001	.948	.898	.898	.983	1.059	1.041	1.007
503	Lumber & other construction mat	1.100	1.066	1.089	1.122	1.059	1.139	.989	.859	.854	.799	.915	1.012	1.052	1.111
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.067	1.000	.965	1.025	1.008	1.016	.904	.961	.997	.937	1.057	1.030	1.025	1.033
506	Electrical goods	.962	1.017	1.016	1.034	1.040	1.106	1.018	1.029	.909	.897	.994	.959	.956	1.014
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.055	1.009	1.073	1.069	1.002	1.106	.978	.940	.948	.890	.951	1.023	1.038	1.022
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.067	1.008	.983	1.015	.994	1.066	.951	1.010	.934	.907	1.016	1.036	1.039	1.039
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	1.047	.896	.954	1.083	1.033	1.128	1.008	.964	.977	.895	1.018	1.025	1.030	.942
51	Nondurable goods	1.075	.991	.992	.987	.962	1.041	.986	1.022	1.000	.915	1.017	1.005	1.056	1.014
511	Paper & paper products	1.027	.971	.988	1.049	.982	1.079	.979	.971	1.009	.931	.992	1.009	1.001	.993
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	1.020	.987	.962	.996	1.007	1.085	.962	.998	1.027	.919	.990	1.031	.989	1.020
514	Groceries & related products	1.068	.994	1.027	1.024	.976	1.035	.979	.989	.990	.914	.997	1.009	1.049	1.006
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.106	.895	.892	.918	.851	1.032	1.100	1.113	1.079	.963	1.055	.946	1.117	.916
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.104	1.015	1.103	1.063	.988	1.066	1.026	1.165	.806	.770	.912	.966	1.055	1.063
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.228	1.047	1.005	.979	.953	1.003	.931	.990	.895	.848	1.040	1.064	1.208	1.119
	Inventories,[1] total	.992	.988	.985	.982	.995	1.010	1.012	1.008	1.003	1.006	1.009	1.008	.992	.988
50	Durable goods	.999	1.005	1.002	1.001	1.011	1.003	.997	.997	.986	.994	1.001	1.004	.998	1.004
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	.989	.997	.977	.962	1.018	1.015	1.008	1.018	1.000	1.005	1.008	1.011	.988	.989
502	Furniture & home furnishings	.989	1.014	.988	1.009	1.005	.994	.987	1.002	.996	1.019	.998	.982	.986	1.012
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	.998	1.009	1.013	1.019	1.016	.991	1.001	1.005	.989	.995	.992	.978	.996	1.010
506	Electrical goods	.992	1.007	1.023	1.018	1.027	1.025	1.002	.989	.972	.966	.972	.997	.991	1.006
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip	1.036	1.000	1.013	.999	.986	.981	.983	.968	.980	1.005	1.024	1.040	1.037	.998
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.006	1.013	1.002	.998	1.000	1.002	.989	.997	.985	.993	1.008	1.005	1.006	1.013
51	Nondurable goods	.979	.960	.952	.947	.967	1.022	1.038	1.030	1.035	1.028	1.026	1.016	.980	.960
511	Paper & paper products	1.008	1.007	1.008	1.018	.992	.989	1.017	.992	.988	.998	.994	.996	1.007	1.007
514	Groceries & related products	.997	.994	.979	.969	.995	1.043	1.051	1.001	.979	1.008	.994	.990	.997	.994
515	Farm-product raw materials	.811	.770	.765	.810	.877	1.066	1.197	1.225	1.240	1.157	1.095	.986	.813	.769
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.005	1.023	1.029	.999	1.000	1.071	1.068	.912	.932	.953	.979	1.020	1.003	1.024
519	Misc. nondurable goods	.998	.945	.949	.921	.933	.964	.957	.998	1.038	1.075	1.118	1.090	.999	.943

[r]Revised.

[1]Adjusted sales and inventory data shown in table 1A are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

NOTE: Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some groups not shown separately. The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through December 1985.

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Monthly Wholesale Trade

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Sales and Inventories

June 1986
Issued August 1986
BW-86-06

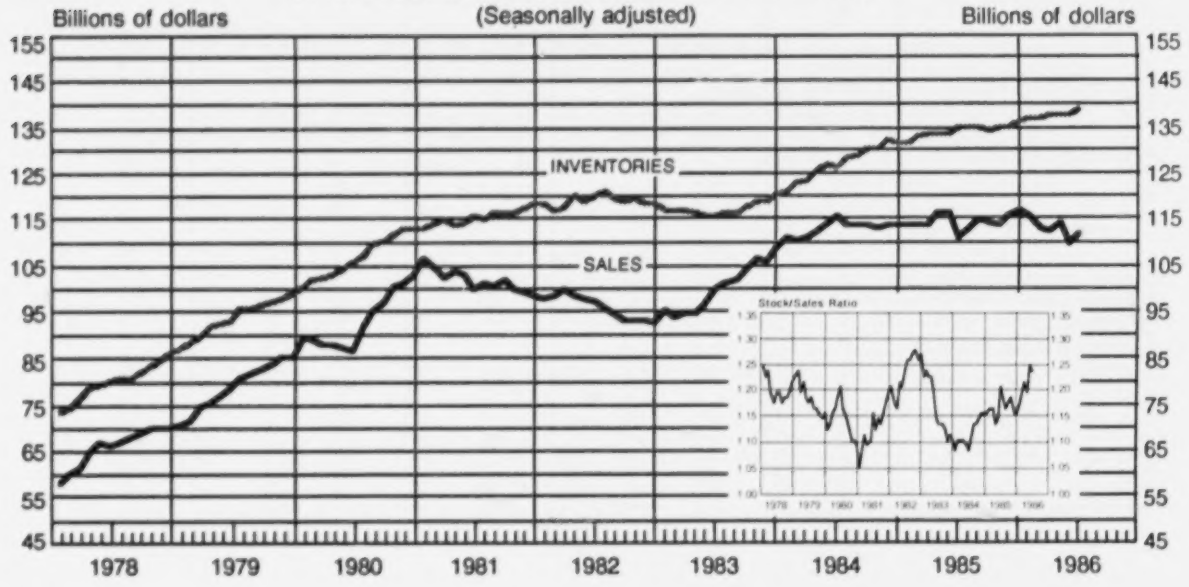
Sales. June 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were $111.9 billion, up 1.8 percent from the revised May level of $109.9 billion and little changed from a year ago. The May preliminary estimate was revised upward by $1.0 billion or about 1.0 percent. June sales of durable goods showed little change from May and were 6.3 percent above a year ago. June sales of nondurable goods increased 2.6 percent from May but were down 3.7 percent from June 1985. The nondurable goods group showed significant increases in miscellaneous nondurable goods, up 8.3 percent, and groceries and related products which increased 3.3 percent.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $138.9 billion at the end of June, up 1.0 percent from the revised May level and up 3.1 percent from a year ago. The May preliminary estimate was revised upward by $0.1 billion or about 0.1 percent. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers were up 0.6 percent from the May level and were 3.5 percent above a year ago. Inventories of nondurable goods wholesalers increased 1.8 percent from May and were little changed from a year ago.

Stock/Sales Ratio. The June stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.24, down from the May ratio of 1.25 but above the year ago ratio of 1.21.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



The *Monthly Wholesale Trade* Report for July is scheduled to be released September 9, 1986, at 10:00 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to **Shirley Roberts**, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-3916 or 763-3917.

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Table 1A. Adjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986						1985						
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June[p]	June[r]	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Sales, total	115,648	113,380	112,495	114,608	109,870	111,879	110,880	113,301	115,146	114,344	113,675	115,762	116,852
50	Durable goods	53,428	52,994	52,674	55,317	53,415	53,973	50,751	50,998	52,538	52,249	52,469	53,408	53,948
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,318	11,398	11,416	11,856	11,755	12,083	10,947	11,299	11,518	11,142	11,383	11,726	11,700
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,983	1,959	1,942	1,950	2,052	2,103	1,938	2,090	2,037	1,981	1,978	2,044	2,083
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,046	4,065	3,975	4,229	4,248	4,037	3,757	3,756	3,816	3,834	3,823	3,900	3,814
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,919	4,936	4,624	4,628	4,452	4,533	4,920	4,965	5,061	5,305	5,082	4,886	4,884
506	Electrical goods	7,716	7,773	7,764	7,632	7,531	7,599	7,067	7,143	7,222	7,481	7,720	7,771	7,799
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,488	3,421	3,553	3,741	3,763	3,304	3,164	3,285	3,277	3,462	3,643	3,518
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,541	13,442	13,662	14,154	13,313	13,387	13,045	13,283	13,575	13,387	13,451	13,479	13,830
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,723	4,612	4,898	5,474	4,928	5,169	4,271	4,187	4,670	4,434	4,230	4,555	4,721
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	60,386	59,821	59,291	56,455	57,906	60,129	62,303	62,608	62,095	61,206	62,354	62,904
511	Paper & paper products	3,197	3,127	3,164	3,184	3,115	3,146	2,930	2,934	2,969	2,910	3,007	3,015	3,080
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,276	2,238	2,289	2,265	2,285	2,256	2,047	2,257	2,203	2,179	2,215	2,214	2,211
514	Groceries & related products	19,104	18,551	18,951	18,741	18,710	19,336	17,713	18,135	17,938	17,974	18,124	18,676	18,808
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,296	7,109	7,018	6,985	6,295	6,641	7,696	7,081	6,971	6,814	6,830	7,464	7,418
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,273	3,323	3,411	3,334	3,371	3,378	3,208	3,345	3,452	3,859	2,917	3,201	3,313
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,743	9,114	9,361	9,475	7,996	8,659	8,342	9,098	9,202	9,026	8,448	7,809	9,472
	Inventories, total	136,624	136,561	137,056	137,083	137,506	138,909	134,696	134,949	134,869	134,410	134,810	134,831	135,940
50	Durable goods	87,815	88,230	88,521	89,267	89,845	90,383	87,359	87,282	87,091	86,688	87,037	87,281	87,246
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,909	16,335	16,344	16,763	16,792	15,918	15,647	15,579	15,650	15,645	15,532	16,023
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,376	3,147	3,208	3,183	3,177	2,931	3,069	3,352	3,278	3,230	3,357	3,282	3,368
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,876	8,770	8,400	8,553	8,422	8,333	8,582	8,544	8,548	8,555	8,425	8,387	8,655
506	Electrical goods	12,511	12,610	12,834	13,050	12,531	12,563	12,887	12,884	12,927	12,837	12,737	12,680	12,586
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,752	5,859	5,915	5,876	5,981	6,240	6,057	6,038	5,920	5,852	5,871	5,836	5,775
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,012	30,406	30,273	30,521	30,872	31,154	29,365	29,497	29,785	29,495	29,713	30,469	30,005
51	Nondurable goods	48,809	48,331	48,535	47,816	47,661	48,526	47,337	47,667	47,778	47,722	47,773	47,550	48,694
511	Paper & paper products	3,154	3,143	3,188	3,170	3,095	3,182	2,939	2,900	2,974	2,981	3,016	3,010	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,611	10,650	10,800	10,912	10,682	10,864	9,627	9,605	9,743	9,658	9,970	9,913	10,265
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,148	7,001	7,096	7,127	6,940	7,251	6,738	6,767	6,591	6,839	6,902	6,807	7,150
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,652	3,750	3,718	3,645	3,643	3,629	3,593	3,474	3,595	3,599	3,582	3,566	3,632
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,408	9,113	9,004	8,946	9,053	8,901	9,554	9,404	9,486	9,674	9,582	9,586	9,470
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.18	1.20	1.22	1.20	1.25	1.24	1.21	1.19	1.17	1.18	1.19	1.16	1.16
50	Durable goods	1.64	1.66	1.68	1.61	1.68	1.67	1.72	1.71	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.63	1.62
501	Motor vehicles & auto equip.	1.42	1.40	1.43	1.38	1.43	1.39	1.45	1.38	1.35	1.40	1.37	1.32	1.37
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.70	1.61	1.65	1.63	1.55	1.39	1.58	1.60	1.61	1.63	1.70	1.61	1.62
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.80	1.78	1.82	1.85	1.89	1.84	1.74	1.72	1.69	1.61	1.66	1.72	1.77
506	Electrical goods	1.62	1.62	1.65	1.71	1.66	1.65	1.82	1.80	1.79	1.72	1.65	1.63	1.61
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.66	1.68	1.73	1.65	1.60	1.66	1.83	1.91	1.80	1.79	1.70	1.60	1.64
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.26	2.22	2.16	2.32	2.33	2.25	2.22	2.19	2.20	2.21	2.26	2.17
51	Nondurable goods	.78	.80	.81	.81	.84	.84	.79	.77	.76	.77	.78	.76	.77
511	Paper & paper products	.99	1.01	1.01	1.00	.99	1.01	1.00	.99	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	.56	.57	.57	.58	.57	.56	.54	.53	.54	.54	.55	.53	.55
515	Farm-product raw materials	.98	.98	1.01	1.02	1.10	1.09	.88	.96	.95	1.00	1.01	.91	.96
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.13	1.09	1.09	1.08	1.07	1.12	1.04	1.04	.93	1.23	1.11	1.10
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.08	1.00	.96	.94	1.13	1.03	1.15	1.03	1.03	1.07	1.13	1.23	1.00

[r]Revised.

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 1B. **Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985**

(Data not adjusted for seasonal variation or trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986						1985							Total 6 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June[p]	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1986	1985
	Sales, total	112,335	102,577	113,986	115,789	114,902	114,579	110,634	113,211	116,066	111,775	121,011	113,874	116,941	674,168	681,048
50	Durable goods	50,115	47,324	53,148	56,202	55,285	55,862	51,106	51,406	54,272	52,040	57,296	52,393	52,653	317,936	306,689
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	11,092	10,042	11,484	12,366	12,695	12,808	11,418	11,446	11,495	10,128	12,294	11,562	11,419	70,487	66,228
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,781	1,759	1,909	2,065	2,109	2,162	1,952	2,025	2,049	1,999	2,293	2,046	1,975	11,785	10,934
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,455	3,248	3,637	4,280	4,524	4,449	3,990	4,090	4,281	4,060	4,354	3,857	3,276	23,593	21,342
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,904	4,625	4,888	4,767	4,554	4,701	4,925	4,791	5,188	5,347	5,163	4,417	4,694	28,439	30,913
506	Electrical goods	7,014	6,972	7,717	7,319	7,200	7,576	7,095	7,257	7,468	7,780	8,538	7,911	8,025	43,798	42,025
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,291	3,104	3,253	3,635	3,849	3,917	3,350	3,395	3,512	3,284	3,829	3,563	3,307	21,049	20,204
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,647	12,192	13,881	14,664	13,846	13,989	13,228	13,057	13,779	13,307	14,339	12,819	13,968	81,219	81,617
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,614	4,128	4,986	5,611	5,022	4,983	3,921	3,994	5,058	4,580	4,772	4,591	4,551	29,344	26,420
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	55,253	60,838	59,587	59,617	58,717	59,528	61,805	61,794	59,735	63,715	61,481	64,288	356,232	374,359
511	Paper & paper products	3,226	2,911	3,139	3,213	3,112	3,121	2,842	2,899	3,115	2,858	3,245	2,952	2,991	18,722	17,309
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,337	2,057	2,266	2,335	2,264	2,290	2,018	2,171	2,194	2,194	2,403	2,130	2,207	13,549	12,524
514	Groceries & related products	18,913	16,956	18,894	18,910	19,683	19,375	17,571	18,625	18,369	17,543	18,758	18,284	18,601	112,731	105,913
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,872	6,846	7,404	6,608	6,988	6,043	6,888	6,316	6,399	5,799	7,049	8,210	8,256	41,761	52,735
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,638	2,559	3,111	3,221	3,560	3,587	3,256	3,690	3,670	3,813	3,109	3,284	3,860	18,676	17,962
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,825	7,729	9,735	10,081	9,691	9,577	8,859	9,143	9,009	8,602	8,473	7,270	9,377	54,638	52,838
	Inventories, total	137,103	137,385	138,407	138,205	136,087	137,517	133,469	132,836	132,424	133,789	136,122	136,376	137,139	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	86,586	87,701	88,610	89,624	89,665	90,835	87,883	87,457	87,178	87,642	87,298	87,019	86,984	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,989	16,466	16,524	16,562	16,742	15,870	15,287	14,987	15,932	15,880	15,656	16,311	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,362	3,207	3,202	3,126	3,142	2,949	3,094	3,312	3,308	3,246	3,337	3,239	3,375	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,778	8,726	8,333	8,365	8,380	8,425	8,676	8,655	8,710	8,692	8,349	8,395	8,698	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	12,161	12,181	12,475	13,011	12,418	12,613	12,964	13,180	13,160	13,184	13,055	12,705	12,448	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,637	5,888	6,057	6,111	6,160	6,246	6,069	6,116	5,914	5,770	5,759	5,737	5,590	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,562	30,193	30,515	30,674	31,026	31,621	29,805	29,556	29,725	29,495	29,772	30,134	29,915	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	50,517	49,684	49,797	48,581	46,422	46,682	45,586	45,379	45,246	46,147	48,824	49,357	50,155	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,116	3,137	3,169	3,157	3,117	3,217	2,971	2,923	3,028	2,957	2,983	3,061	3,077	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,388	10,735	10,735	10,803	10,661	10,842	9,608	9,403	9,441	9,610	10,399	10,419	10,275	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	8,864	8,100	7,770	7,027	5,559	5,634	5,229	5,177	5,339	5,998	7,357	8,148	8,759	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,404	3,574	3,640	3,718	3,647	3,716	3,679	3,575	3,591	3,599	3,836	3,808	3,312	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,766	9,796	10,067	9,751	9,008	8,474	9,095	8,924	8,737	9,026	9,237	9,174	9,451	(X)	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.22	1.34	1.21	1.19	1.18	1.20	1.21	1.17	1.14	1.20	1.12	1.20	1.17	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.73	1.85	1.67	1.59	1.62	1.63	1.72	1.70	1.61	1.68	1.52	1.66	1.65	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	1.45	1.59	1.43	1.34	1.30	1.31	1.39	1.34	1.30	1.57	1.29	1.35	1.43	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.89	1.82	1.68	1.51	1.49	1.36	1.59	1.64	1.61	1.62	1.46	1.58	1.71	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.79	1.89	1.70	1.75	1.84	1.79	1.76	1.81	1.68	1.63	1.62	1.90	1.85	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	1.73	1.75	1.62	1.78	1.72	1.66	1.83	1.82	1.76	1.69	1.53	1.61	1.55	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.90	1.86	1.68	1.60	1.59	1.81	1.80	1.68	1.76	1.50	1.61	1.69	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.34	2.48	2.20	2.09	2.24	2.26	2.25	2.26	2.16	2.22	2.08	2.35	2.14	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	.81	.90	.82	.82	.78	.80	.77	.73	.73	.77	.77	.80	.78	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	.97	1.08	1.01	.98	1.00	1.03	1.05	1.01	.97	1.03	.92	1.04	1.03	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	.55	.63	.57	.57	.54	.56	.55	.50	.51	.55	.55	.57	.55	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.13	1.18	1.05	1.06	.80	.93	.76	.82	.83	1.03	1.04	.99	1.06	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.29	1.40	1.17	1.15	1.02	1.04	1.13	.97	.98	.94	1.23	1.16	.86	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.25	1.27	1.03	.97	.93	.88	1.03	.98	.97	1.05	1.09	1.26	1.01	(X)	(X)

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*
x Cumulative data are not applicable for inventories or stock/sales ratios, cumulative seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. **Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers**

SIC code	Kind of business	Unadjusted					Adjusted[1]			
		Sales			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		June 1986 from May 1986	June 1986 from June 1985	6 months 1986 from 6 months 1985	June 1986 from May 1986	June 1986 from June 1985	June 1986 from May 1986	June 1986 from June 1985	June 1986 from May 1986	June 1986 from June 1985
	Total	-.3	+3.6	-1.0	+1.1	+3.0	+1.8	+.9	+1.0	+3.1
50	Durable goods	+1.0	+9.3	+3.7	+1.3	+3.4	+1.0	+6.3	+.6	+3.5
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	+.9	+12.2	+6.4	+1.1	+5.5	+2.8	+10.4	+.2	+5.5
502	Furniture & home furnishings	+2.5	+10.8	+7.8	-6.1	-4.7	+2.5	+8.5	-7.7	-4.5
503	Lumber & other construction mat	-1.7	+11.5	+10.5	(S)	(S)	-5.0	+7.5	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	+3.2	-4.5	-8.0	+.5	-2.9	+1.8	-7.9	-1.1	-2.9
506	Electrical goods	+5.2	+6.8	+4.2	+1.6	-2.7	+.9	+7.5	+.3	-2.5
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	+1.8	+16.9	+4.2	+1.4	+2.9	+.6	+13.9	+4.3	+3.0
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	+1.0	+5.8	-.5	+1.9	+6.1	+.6	+2.6	+.9	+6.1
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	-.8	+27.1	+11.1	(S)	(S)	+4.9	+21.0	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	-1.5	-1.4	-4.8	+.6	+2.4	+2.6	-3.7	+1.8	+2.5
511	Paper & paper products	+.3	+9.8	+8.2	+3.2	+8.3	+1.0	+7.4	+2.8	+8.3
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	+1.1	+13.5	+8.2	(S)	(S)	-1.3	+10.2	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	-1.6	+10.3	+6.4	+1.7	+12.8	+3.3	+9.2	+1.7	+12.8
515	Farm-product raw materials	-13.5	-12.3	-20.8	+1.3	+7.7	+5.5	-13.7	+4.5	+7.6
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	+.8	+10.2	+4.0	+1.9	+1.0	+.2	+5.3	-.4	+1.0
519	Misc. nondurable goods	-1.2	+8.1	+3.4	-5.9	-6.8	+8.3	+3.8	-1.7	-6.8

S Data do not meet publication standards.

[1]Adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972*, and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +1.0 percent to -0.5 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.4 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +0.3 percent to -0.8 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarily, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Classification Differences Between Monthly Survey and 1977 and 1982 Censuses of Wholesale Trade

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

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[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

[3]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program,* U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series,* Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. **Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories**

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.9	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

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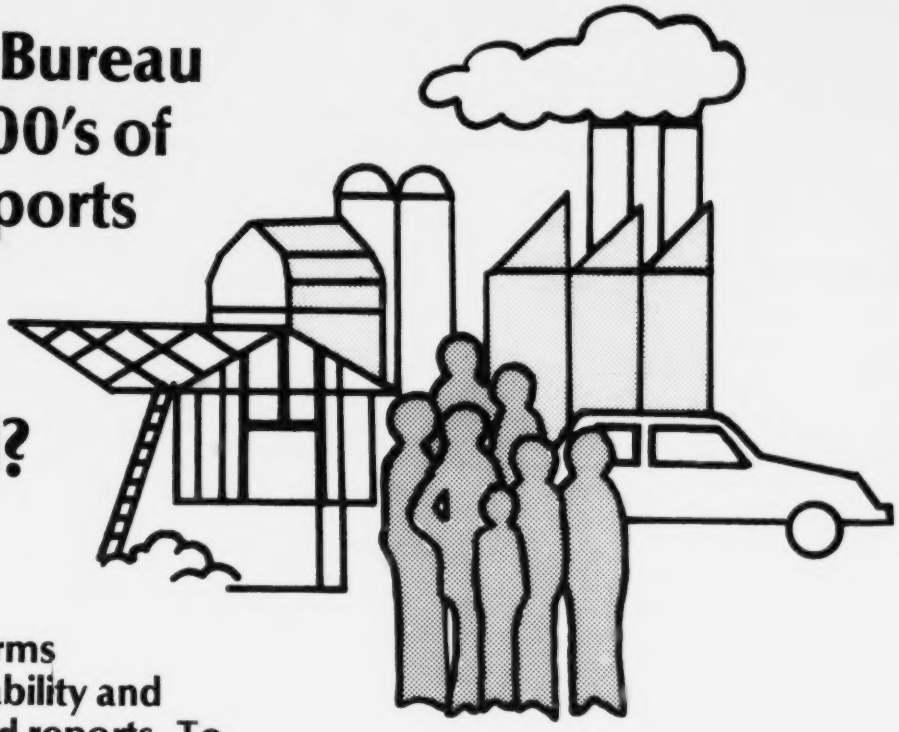

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Monthly Wholesale Trade

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Sales and Inventories

July 1986

Issued September 1986
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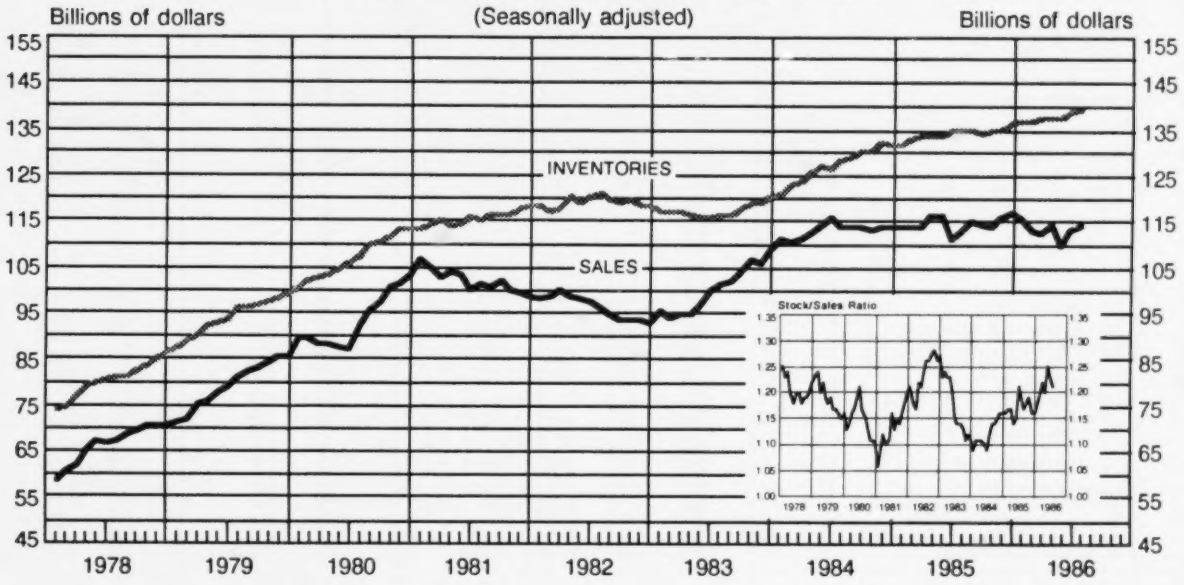
Sales. July 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were $114.8 billion, up 1.7 percent from the revised June level of $112.9 billion and showed little change from a year ago. The June preliminary estimate was revised upward by $1.0 billion or about 0.9 percent. July sales of durable goods were little changed from June and were 7.8 percent above a year ago. July sales of nondurable goods were up 2.3 percent from June but were 3.7 percent below July 1985.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $139.5 billion at the end of July, little changed from the revised June level and up 3.5 percent from a year ago. The June preliminary estimate was revised downward by $0.1 billion or about 0.1 percent. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers were up 0.6 percent from the June level and were 3.9 percent above a year ago. Inventories of nondurable goods wholesalers were little changed from June and from a year ago.

Stock/Sales Ratio. The June stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.21, down from the June ratio of 1.23 and above the year ago ratio of 1.19.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



The *Monthly Wholesale Trade* Report for August is scheduled to be released October 8, 1986, at 10:00 a.m.

U.S. Department of Commerce
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Address inquiries concerning this report to **Shirley Roberts,** Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-3916 or 763-3917.

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Table 1A. **Adjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985**

(Data adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986							1985					
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July[p]	July[r]	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Sales, total	115,648	113,380	112,495	114,608	109,870	112,873	114,840	113,152	115,146	114,344	113,675	115,762	116,852
50	Durable goods	53,428	52,994	52,674	55,317	53,415	54,491	55,105	51,099	52,538	52,249	52,469	53,408	53,948
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,318	11,398	11,416	11,856	11,755	12,490	12,942	11,200	11,518	11,142	11,383	11,726	11,700
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,983	1,959	1,942	1,950	2,052	2,155	2,144	2,029	2,037	1,981	1,978	2,044	2,083
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,046	4,065	3,975	4,229	4,248	4,013	4,199	3,728	3,816	3,834	3,823	3,900	3,814
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,919	4,936	4,624	4,628	4,452	4,583	4,708	4,909	5,061	5,305	5,082	4,886	4,884
506	Electrical goods	7,716	7,773	7,764	7,632	7,531	7,718	7,631	7,192	7,222	7,481	7,720	7,771	7,799
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,488	3,421	3,553	3,741	3,700	3,432	3,218	3,285	3,277	3,462	3,643	3,518
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,541	13,442	13,662	14,154	13,313	13,472	13,789	13,242	13,575	13,387	13,451	13,479	13,830
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,723	4,612	4,898	5,474	4,928	5,061	4,755	4,267	4,670	4,434	4,230	4,555	4,721
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	60,386	59,821	59,291	56,455	58,382	59,735	62,053	62,608	62,095	61,206	62,354	62,904
511	Paper & paper products	3,197	3,127	3,164	3,184	3,115	3,187	3,131	2,934	2,969	2,910	3,007	3,015	3,080
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,276	2,238	2,289	2,265	2,285	2,261	2,394	2,182	2,203	2,179	2,215	2,214	2,211
514	Groceries & related products	19,104	18,551	18,951	18,741	18,710	19,206	19,453	18,013	17,938	17,974	18,124	18,676	18,808
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,296	7,109	7,018	6,985	6,295	6,742	6,920	7,097	6,971	6,814	6,830	7,464	7,418
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,273	3,323	3,411	3,334	3,371	3,372	3,308	3,336	3,452	3,859	2,917	3,201	3,313
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,743	9,114	9,361	9,475	7,996	8,865	9,455	9,008	9,202	9,026	8,448	7,809	9,472
	Inventories, total	136,624	136,561	137,056	137,083	137,506	138,793	139,489	134,762	134,869	134,410	134,810	134,831	135,940
50	Durable goods	87,815	88,230	88,521	89,267	89,845	90,000	90,572	87,195	87,091	86,688	87,037	87,281	87,246
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,909	16,335	16,344	16,763	17,002	17,348	15,663	15,579	15,650	15,645	15,532	16,023
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,376	3,147	3,208	3,183	3,177	3,015	3,134	3,339	3,278	3,230	3,357	3,282	3,368
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,876	8,770	8,400	8,553	8,422	8,406	8,299	8,552	8,548	8,555	8,425	8,387	8,655
506	Electrical goods	12,511	12,610	12,834	13,050	12,531	12,731	13,125	12,833	12,927	12,837	12,737	12,680	12,586
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,752	5,859	5,915	5,876	5,981	6,038	5,891	6,049	5,920	5,852	5,871	5,836	5,775
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,012	30,406	30,273	30,521	30,872	30,523	30,396	29,526	29,785	29,495	29,713	30,469	30,005
51	Nondurable goods	48,809	48,331	48,535	47,816	47,661	48,793	48,917	47,567	47,778	47,722	47,773	47,550	48,694
511	Paper & paper products	3,154	3,143	3,188	3,170	3,095	3,127	3,099	2,906	2,974	2,981	3,016	3,010	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,611	10,650	10,800	10,912	10,682	10,905	10,925	9,575	9,743	9,658	9,970	9,913	10,265
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,148	7,001	7,096	7,127	6,940	7,338	7,260	6,803	6,591	6,839	6,902	6,807	7,150
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,652	3,750	3,718	3,645	3,643	3,665	3,612	3,474	3,595	3,599	3,582	3,566	3,632
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,408	9,113	9,004	8,946	9,053	8,968	8,904	9,433	9,486	9,674	9,582	9,586	9,470
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.18	1.20	1.22	1.20	1.25	1.23	1.21	1.19	1.17	1.18	1.19	1.16	1.16
50	Durable goods	1.64	1.66	1.68	1.61	1.68	1.65	1.64	1.71	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.63	1.62
501	Motor vehicles & auto equip.	1.42	1.40	1.43	1.38	1.43	1.36	1.34	1.40	1.35	1.40	1.37	1.32	1.37
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.70	1.61	1.65	1.63	1.55	1.40	1.46	1.65	1.61	1.63	1.70	1.61	1.62
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.80	1.78	1.82	1.85	1.89	1.83	1.76	1.74	1.69	1.61	1.66	1.72	1.77
506	Electrical goods	1.62	1.62	1.65	1.71	1.66	1.65	1.72	1.78	1.79	1.72	1.65	1.63	1.61
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.66	1.68	1.73	1.65	1.60	1.63	1.72	1.88	1.80	1.79	1.70	1.60	1.64
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.26	2.22	2.16	2.32	2.27	2.20	2.23	2.19	2.20	2.21	2.26	2.17
51	Nondurable goods	.78	.80	.81	.81	.84	.84	.82	.77	.76	.77	.78	.76	.77
511	Paper & paper products	.99	1.01	1.01	1.00	.99	.98	.99	.99	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	.56	.57	.57	.58	.57	.57	.56	.53	.54	.54	.55	.53	.55
515	Farm-product raw materials	.98	.98	1.01	1.02	1.10	1.09	1.05	.96	.95	1.00	1.01	.91	.96
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.13	1.09	1.09	1.08	1.09	1.09	1.04	1.04	.93	1.23	1.11	1.10
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.08	1.00	.96	.94	1.13	1.01	.94	1.05	1.03	1.07	1.13	1.23	1.00

[r]Revised.

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 1B. Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data not adjusted for seasonal variation or trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986							1985						Total 7 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July[P]	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1986	1985
	Sales, total	112,335	102,577	113,986	115,789	114,902	114,570	115,795	113,211	116,066	111,775	121,011	113,874	116,941	789,954	794,259
50	Durable goods	50,115	47,324	53,148	56,202	55,285	56,071	55,821	51,406	54,272	52,040	57,296	52,393	52,653	373,966	358,095
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	11,092	10,042	11,484	12,366	12,695	13,040	13,498	11,446	11,495	10,128	12,294	11,562	11,419	84,217	77,674
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,781	1,759	1,909	2,065	2,109	2,215	2,176	2,025	2,049	1,999	2,293	2,046	1,975	14,014	12,959
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,455	3,248	3,637	4,280	4,524	4,402	4,636	4,090	4,281	4,060	4,354	3,857	3,276	28,182	25,432
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,904	4,625	4,888	4,767	4,554	4,753	4,628	4,791	5,188	5,347	5,163	4,417	4,694	33,119	35,704
506	Electrical goods	7,014	6,972	7,717	7,319	7,200	7,741	7,768	7,257	7,468	7,780	8,538	7,911	8,025	51,731	49,282
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,291	3,104	3,253	3,635	3,849	3,833	3,658	3,395	3,512	3,284	3,829	3,563	3,307	24,623	23,599
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,647	12,192	13,881	14,664	13,846	13,836	13,720	13,057	13,779	13,307	14,339	12,819	13,968	94,786	94,674
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,614	4,128	4,986	5,611	5,022	4,914	4,465	3,994	5,058	4,580	4,772	4,591	4,551	33,740	30,414
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	55,253	60,838	59,587	59,617	58,499	59,974	61,805	61,794	59,735	63,715	61,481	64,288	415,988	436,164
511	Paper & paper products	3,226	2,911	3,139	3,213	3,112	3,184	3,140	2,899	3,115	2,858	3,245	2,952	2,991	21,925	20,208
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,337	2,057	2,266	2,335	2,264	2,259	2,423	2,171	2,194	2,194	2,403	2,130	2,207	15,941	14,695
514	Groceries & related products	18,913	16,956	18,894	18,910	19,683	19,283	20,289	18,625	18,369	17,543	18,758	18,284	18,601	132,928	124,538
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,872	6,846	7,404	6,608	6,988	6,041	6,207	6,316	6,399	5,799	7,049	8,210	8,256	47,966	59,051
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,638	2,559	3,111	3,221	3,560	3,598	3,708	3,690	3,670	3,813	3,109	3,284	3,860	22,395	21,652
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,825	7,729	9,735	10,081	9,691	9,592	9,502	9,143	9,009	8,602	8,473	7,270	9,377	64,155	61,981
	Inventories, total	137,103	137,385	138,407	138,205	136,087	137,340	137,420	132,836	132,424	133,789	136,122	136,376	137,139	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	86,586	87,701	88,610	89,624	89,665	90,450	90,753	87,457	87,178	87,642	87,298	87,019	86,984	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,989	16,466	16,524	16,562	16,968	16,914	15,287	14,987	15,932	15,880	15,656	16,311	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,362	3,207	3,202	3,126	3,142	3,021	3,109	3,312	3,308	3,246	3,337	3,239	3,375	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,778	8,726	8,333	8,365	8,380	8,498	8,390	8,655	8,710	8,692	8,349	8,395	8,698	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	12,161	12,181	12,475	13,011	12,418	12,769	13,493	13,180	13,160	13,184	13,055	12,705	12,448	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,637	5,888	6,057	6,111	6,160	6,050	5,950	6,116	5,914	5,770	5,759	5,737	5,590	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,562	30,193	30,515	30,674	31,026	30,920	30,366	29,556	29,725	29,495	29,772	30,134	29,915	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	50,517	49,684	49,797	48,581	46,422	46,890	46,667	45,379	45,246	46,147	48,824	49,357	50,155	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,116	3,137	3,169	3,157	3,117	3,158	3,114	2,923	3,028	2,957	2,983	3,061	3,077	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,388	10,735	10,735	10,803	10,661	10,872	10,739	9,403	9,441	9,610	10,399	10,419	10,275	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	8,864	8,100	7,770	7,027	5,559	5,702	5,510	5,177	5,339	5,998	7,357	8,148	8,759	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,404	3,574	3,640	3,718	3,647	3,764	3,713	3,575	3,591	3,599	3,836	3,808	3,312	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,766	9,796	10,067	9,751	9,008	8,645	8,414	8,924	8,737	9,026	9,237	9,174	9,451	(X)	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.22	1.34	1.21	1.19	1.18	1.20	1.19	1.17	1.14	1.20	1.12	1.20	1.17	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.73	1.85	1.67	1.59	1.62	1.61	1.63	1.70	1.61	1.68	1.52	1.66	1.65	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	1.45	1.59	1.43	1.34	1.30	1.30	1.25	1.34	1.30	1.57	1.29	1.35	1.43	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.89	1.82	1.68	1.51	1.49	1.36	1.43	1.64	1.61	1.62	1.46	1.58	1.71	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.79	1.89	1.70	1.75	1.84	1.79	1.81	1.81	1.68	1.63	1.62	1.90	1.85	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	1.73	1.75	1.62	1.78	1.72	1.65	1.74	1.82	1.76	1.69	1.53	1.61	1.55	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.90	1.86	1.68	1.60	1.58	1.63	1.80	1.68	1.76	1.50	1.61	1.69	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.34	2.48	2.20	2.09	2.24	2.23	2.21	2.26	2.16	2.22	2.08	2.35	2.14	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	.81	.90	.82	.82	.78	.80	.78	.73	.73	.77	.77	.80	.78	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	.97	1.08	1.01	.98	1.00	.99	.99	1.01	.97	1.03	.92	1.04	1.03	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	.55	.63	.57	.57	.54	.56	.53	.50	.51	.55	.55	.57	.55	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.13	1.18	1.05	1.06	.80	.94	.89	.82	.83	1.03	1.04	.99	1.06	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.29	1.40	1.17	1.15	1.02	1.05	1.00	.97	.98	.94	1.23	1.16	.86	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.25	1.27	1.03	.97	.93	.90	.89	.98	.97	1.05	1.09	1.26	1.01	(X)	(X)

[P]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*
x Cumulative data are not applicable for inventories or stock/sales ratios, cumulative seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. **Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers**

SIC code	Kind of business	Unadjusted					Adjusted[1]			
		Sales			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		July 1986 from June 1986	July 1986 from July 1985	7 months 1986 from 7 months 1985	July 1986 from June 1986	July 1986 from July 1985	July 1986 from June 1986	July 1986 from July 1985	July 1986 from June 1986	July 1986 from July 1985
	Total	+1.1	+2.3	-.5	+.1	+3.5	+1.7	+1.5	+.5	+3.5
50	Durable goods	-.4	+8.6	+4.4	+.3	+3.8	+1.1	+7.8	+.6	+3.9
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	+3.5	+17.9	+8.4	-.3	+10.6	+3.6	+15.6	+2.5	+10.8
502	Furniture & home furnishings	-1.8	+7.5	+8.1	+2.9	-6.1	-.5	+5.7	+3.5	-6.1
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	+5.3	+13.3	+10.8	(S)	(S)	+4.6	+12.6	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	-2.6	-3.4	-7.2	-1.3	-3.1	+2.7	-4.1	-1.3	-3.0
506	Electrical goods	+.3	+7.0	+5.0	+5.7	+2.4	-1.1	+6.1	+3.1	+2.3
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	-4.6	+7.7	+4.3	-1.7	-2.7	-7.2	+6.7	-2.4	-2.6
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	-.8	+5.1	+.1	-1.8	+2.7	+2.4	+4.1	-.4	+2.9
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	-9.1	+11.8	+10.9	(S)	(S)	-6.0	+11.4	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	+2.5	-3.0	-4.6	-.5	+2.8	+2.3	-3.7	+.3	+2.8
511	Paper & paper products	-1.4	+8.3	+8.5	-1.4	+6.5	-1.8	+6.7	-.9	+6.6
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	+7.3	+11.6	+8.5	(S)	(S)	+5.9	+9.7	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	+5.2	+8.9	+6.7	-1.2	+14.2	+1.3	+8.0	+.2	+14.1
515	Farm-product raw materials	+2.7	-1.7	-18.8	-3.4	+6.4	+2.6	-2.5	-1.1	+6.7
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	+3.1	+.5	+3.4	-1.4	+3.9	-1.9	-.8	-1.4	+4.0
519	Misc. nondurable goods	-.9	+3.9	+3.5	-2.7	-5.7	+6.7	+5.0	-.7	-5.6

S Data do not meet publication standards.

[1]Adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972*, and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +1.0 percent to -0.4 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.4 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +0.3 percent to -0.8 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarly, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Classification Differences Between Monthly Survey and 1977 and 1982 Censuses of Wholesale Trade

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

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[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

[3]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program*, U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series*, Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.9	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

Table 4. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of business	1985						1986							
		July[r]	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June[r]	July[r]	Aug.
	Sales,[1] total	1.000	1.006	.977	1.063	.984	1.002	.976	.905	1.012	1.008	1.039	1.012	1.007	.975
50	Durable goods	1.006	1.033	.996	1.092	.981	.976	.938	.893	1.009	1.016	1.035	1.029	1.013	.995
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.022	.998	.909	1.080	.986	.976	.980	.881	1.006	1.043	1.080	1.044	1.043	.956
502	Furniture & home furnishings	.998	1.006	1.009	1.159	1.001	.948	.898	.898	.983	1.059	1.028	1.028	1.015	.977
503	Lumber & other construction mat	1.097	1.122	1.059	1.139	.989	.859	.854	.799	.915	1.012	1.065	1.097	1.104	1.098
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	.976	1.025	1.008	1.016	.904	.961	.997	.937	1.057	1.030	1.023	1.037	.983	.996
506	Electrical goods	1.009	1.034	1.040	1.106	1.018	1.029	.909	.897	.994	.959	.956	1.003	1.018	1.014
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.055	1.069	1.002	1.106	.978	.940	.948	.890	.951	1.023	1.029	1.036	1.066	1.027
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	.986	1.015	.994	1.066	.951	1.010	.934	.907	1.016	1.036	1.040	1.027	.995	.982
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	.936	1.083	1.033	1.128	1.008	.964	.977	.895	1.018	1.025	1.019	.971	.939	1.027
51	Nondurable goods	.996	.987	.962	1.041	.986	1.022	1.000	.915	1.017	1.005	1.056	1.002	1.004	.956
511	Paper & paper products	.988	1.049	.982	1.079	.979	.971	1.009	.931	.992	1.009	.999	.999	1.003	1.007
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	.995	.996	1.007	1.085	.962	.998	1.027	.919	.990	1.031	.991	.999	1.012	.959
514	Groceries & related products	1.034	1.024	.976	1.035	.979	.989	.990	.914	.997	1.009	1.052	1.004	1.043	.992
515	Farm-product raw materials	.890	.918	.851	1.032	1.100	1.113	1.079	.963	1.055	.946	1.110	.896	.897	.857
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.106	1.063	.988	1.066	1.026	1.165	.806	.770	.912	.966	1.056	1.067	1.121	1.004
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.015	.979	.953	1.003	.931	.990	.895	.848	1.040	1.064	1.212	1.082	1.005	.955
	Inventories,[1] total	.986	.982	.995	1.010	1.012	1.008	1.003	1.006	1.000	1.008	.991	.989	.985	.981
50	Durable goods	1.003	1.001	1.011	1.003	.997	.997	.986	.994	1.001	1.004	.998	1.005	1.002	1.001
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	.976	.962	1.018	1.015	1.008	1.016	1.000	1.005	1.008	1.011	.988	.998	.975	.960
502	Furniture & home furnishings	.992	1.009	1.005	.994	.987	1.002	.996	1.019	.998	.982	.989	1.002	.992	1.011
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.012	1.019	1.016	.991	1.001	1.005	.989	.995	.992	.978	.995	1.011	1.011	1.018
506	Electrical goods	1.027	1.018	1.027	1.025	1.002	.989	.972	.966	.972	.997	.991	1.003	1.028	1.020
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip	1.011	.999	.986	.981	.983	.968	.980	1.005	1.024	1.040	1.030	1.002	1.010	.998
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.001	.998	1.000	1.002	.989	.997	.985	.993	1.008	1.005	1.005	1.013	.999	.998
51	Nondurable goods	.954	.947	.967	1.022	1.038	1.030	1.035	1.028	1.026	1.016	.974	.961	.954	.947
511	Paper & paper products	1.006	1.018	.992	.989	1.017	.992	.988	.998	.994	.996	1.007	1.010	1.005	1.017
514	Groceries & related products	.982	.969	.995	1.043	1.051	1.001	.979	1.008	.994	.990	.998	.997	.983	.972
515	Farm-product raw materials	.761	.810	.877	1.066	1.197	1.225	1.240	1.157	1.095	.986	.801	.777	.759	.808
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.029	.999	1.000	1.071	1.068	.912	.932	.953	.979	1.020	1.001	1.027	1.028	.999
519	Misc. nondurable goods	.946	.921	.933	.964	.957	.998	1.038	1.075	1.118	1.090	.995	.964	.945	.920

[r]Revised.

[1]Adjusted sales and inventory data shown in table 1A are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

NOTE: Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some groups not shown separately. The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through the current month preliminary estimate.

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86-08

Monthly Wholesale Trade

Sales and Inventories

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

August 1986

Issued October 1986
BW-86-08

Sales. August 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were $114.5 billion, little changed from the revised July level and from a year ago. The July preliminary estimate was revised downward by $0.5 billion or about 0.4 percent. August sales of durable goods were down 1.5 percent from July but were 2.6 percent above a year ago. August sales of nondurable goods showed evidence of an increase from July but were 3.4 percent below August 1985.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $140.7 billion at the end of August, up 0.7 percent from the revised July level of $139.8 billion and up 4.5 percent from a year ago. The July preliminary estimate was revised upward by $0.3 billion or about 0.2 percent. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers were up 0.7 percent from the July level and were 5.1 percent above a year ago. Inventories of nondurable goods wholesalers were little changed from July and from a year ago.

Stock/Sales Ratio. The August stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.23, up from the July ratio of 1.22 and above the year ago ratio of 1.17.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

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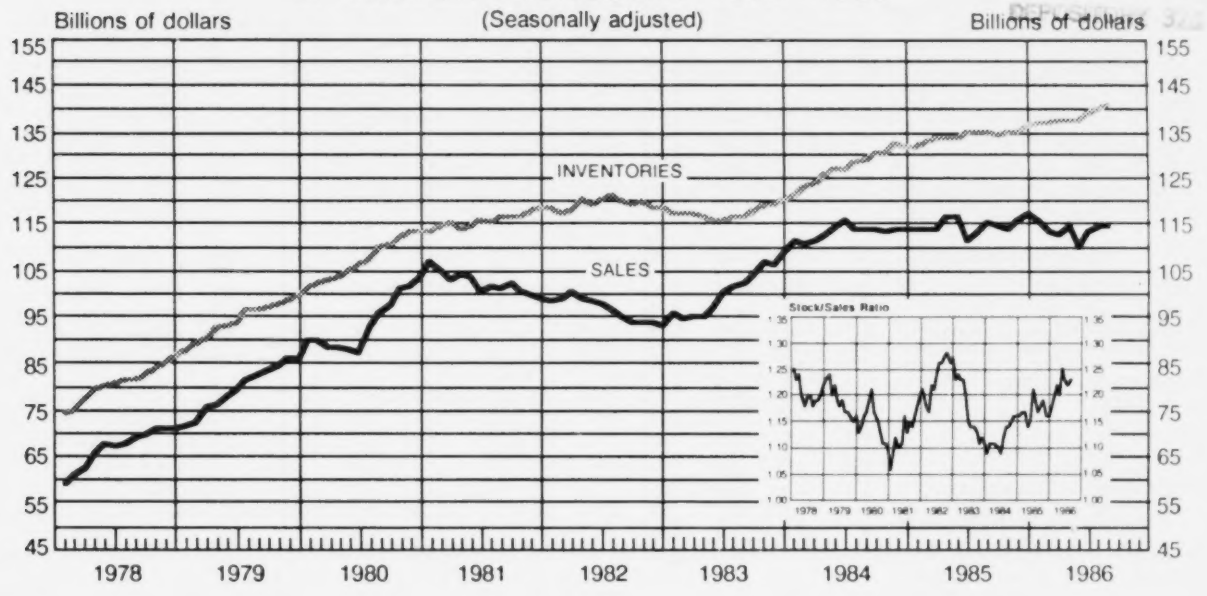
Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



The *Monthly Wholesale Trade* Report for September is scheduled to be released November 7, 1986, at 10:00 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to **Shirley Roberts**, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-3916 or 763-3917.

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Table 1A. Adjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986								1985				
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.[p]	Aug.[r]	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Sales, total	115,648	113,380	112,495	114,608	109,870	112,873	114,375	114,518	115,263	114,344	113,675	115,762	116,852
50	Durable goods	53,428	52,994	52,674	55,317	53,415	54,491	55,012	54,202	52,845	52,249	52,469	53,408	53,948
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,318	11,398	11,416	11,856	11,755	12,490	12,938	12,680	11,588	11,142	11,383	11,726	11,700
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,983	1,959	1,942	1,950	2,052	2,155	2,112	2,204	2,011	1,981	1,978	2,044	2,083
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,046	4,065	3,975	4,229	4,248	4,013	4,154	4,052	3,805	3,834	3,823	3,900	3,814
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,919	4,936	4,624	4,628	4,452	4,583	4,755	4,569	5,047	5,305	5,082	4,886	4,884
506	Electrical goods	7,716	7,773	7,764	7,632	7,531	7,718	7,579	7,509	7,250	7,481	7,720	7,771	7,799
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,488	3,421	3,553	3,741	3,700	3,572	3,400	3,313	3,277	3,462	3,643	3,518
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,541	13,442	13,662	14,154	13,313	13,472	13,770	13,634	13,575	13,387	13,451	13,479	13,830
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,723	4,612	4,898	5,474	4,928	5,061	4,742	4,673	4,696	4,434	4,230	4,555	4,721
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	60,386	59,821	59,291	56,455	58,382	59,363	60,316	62,418	62,095	61,206	62,354	62,904
511	Paper & paper products	3,197	3,127	3,164	3,184	3,115	3,187	3,162	3,182	2,972	2,910	3,007	3,015	3,080
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,276	2,238	2,289	2,265	2,285	2,261	2,368	2,427	2,196	2,179	2,215	2,214	2,211
514	Groceries & related products	19,104	18,551	18,951	18,741	18,710	19,206	19,466	20,236	17,921	17,974	18,124	18,676	18,808
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,296	7,109	7,018	6,985	6,295	6,742	6,782	6,254	7,166	6,814	6,830	7,464	7,418
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,273	3,323	3,411	3,334	3,371	3,372	3,262	3,496	3,414	3,859	2,917	3,201	3,313
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,743	9,114	9,361	9,475	7,996	8,865	9,304	8,781	9,137	9,026	8,448	7,809	9,472
	Inventories, total	136,624	136,561	137,056	137,083	137,506	138,793	139,753	140,735	134,732	134,410	134,810	134,831	135,940
50	Durable goods	87,815	88,230	89,521	89,267	89,845	90,000	90,816	91,429	87,004	86,688	87,037	87,281	87,246
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,909	16,335	16,344	16,763	17,002	17,178	17,582	15,595	15,650	15,645	15,532	16,023
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,376	3,147	3,208	3,183	3,177	3,015	3,116	3,088	3,266	3,230	3,357	3,282	3,368
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,876	8,770	8,400	8,553	8,422	8,406	8,249	8,004	8,556	8,555	8,425	8,387	8,655
506	Electrical goods	12,511	12,610	12,834	13,050	12,531	12,731	13,058	13,024	12,877	12,837	12,737	12,680	12,586
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,752	5,859	5,915	5,876	5,981	6,038	5,991	6,105	5,914	5,852	5,871	5,836	5,775
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,012	30,406	30,273	30,521	30,872	30,523	30,905	31,288	29,695	29,495	29,713	30,469	30,005
51	Nondurable goods	48,809	48,331	48,535	47,816	47,661	48,793	48,937	49,306	47,728	47,722	47,773	47,550	48,694
511	Paper & paper products	3,154	3,143	3,188	3,170	3,095	3,127	3,141	3,135	2,977	2,981	3,016	3,010	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,611	10,650	10,800	10,912	10,682	10,905	10,891	10,955	9,743	9,658	9,970	9,913	10,265
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,148	7,001	7,096	7,127	6,940	7,338	7,154	6,756	6,674	6,839	6,902	6,807	7,150
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,652	3,750	3,718	3,645	3,643	3,665	3,560	3,520	3,605	3,599	3,582	3,566	3,632
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,408	9,113	9,004	8,946	9,053	8,968	8,965	9,362	9,385	9,674	9,582	9,586	9,470
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.18	1.20	1.22	1.20	1.25	1.23	1.22	1.23	1.17	1.18	1.19	1.16	1.16
50	Durable goods	1.64	1.66	1.68	1.61	1.68	1.65	1.65	1.69	1.65	1.66	1.66	1.63	1.62
501	Motor vehicles & auto equip.	1.42	1.40	1.43	1.38	1.43	1.36	1.33	1.39	1.35	1.40	1.37	1.32	1.37
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.70	1.61	1.65	1.63	1.55	1.40	1.48	1.40	1.62	1.63	1.70	1.61	1.62
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.80	1.78	1.82	1.85	1.89	1.83	1.73	1.75	1.70	1.61	1.66	1.72	1.77
506	Electrical goods	1.62	1.62	1.65	1.71	1.66	1.65	1.72	1.73	1.78	1.72	1.65	1.63	1.61
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.66	1.68	1.73	1.65	1.60	1.63	1.68	1.80	1.79	1.79	1.70	1.60	1.64
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.26	2.22	2.16	2.32	2.27	2.24	2.29	2.19	2.20	2.21	2.26	2.17
51	Nondurable goods	.78	.80	.81	.81	.84	.84	.82	.82	.76	.77	.78	.76	.77
511	Paper & paper products	.99	1.01	1.01	1.00	.99	.98	.99	.99	1.00	1.02	1.00	1.00	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	.56	.57	.57	.58	.57	.57	.56	.54	.54	.54	.55	.53	.55
515	Farm-product raw materials	.98	.98	1.01	1.02	1.10	1.09	1.05	1.08	.93	1.00	1.01	.91	.96
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.13	1.09	1.09	1.08	1.09	1.09	1.01	1.06	.93	1.23	1.11	1.10
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.08	1.00	.96	.94	1.13	1.01	.96	1.07	1.03	1.07	1.13	1.23	1.00

[r]Revised.

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985*.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 1B. **Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985**

(Data not adjusted for seasonal variation or trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986								1985					Total 8 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.[p]	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1986	1985
	Sales, total	112,335	102,577	113,986	115,789	114,902	114,570	115,361	111,787	116,066	111,775	121,011	113,874	116,941	901,307	910,325
50	Durable goods	50,115	47,324	53,148	56,202	55,285	56,071	56,057	53,823	54,272	52,040	57,296	52,393	52,653	428,025	412,367
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	11,092	10,042	11,484	12,366	12,695	13,040	13,559	12,059	11,495	10,128	12,294	11,562	11,419	96,337	89,169
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,781	1,759	1,909	2,065	2,109	2,215	2,108	2,204	2,049	1,999	2,293	2,046	1,975	16,150	15,008
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,455	3,248	3,637	4,280	4,524	4,402	4,586	4,437	4,281	4,060	4,354	3,857	3,276	32,569	29,713
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,904	4,625	4,888	4,767	4,554	4,753	4,698	4,574	5,188	5,347	5,163	4,417	4,694	37,763	40,892
506	Electrical goods	7,014	6,972	7,717	7,319	7,200	7,741	7,731	7,569	7,468	7,780	8,538	7,911	8,025	59,263	56,750
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,291	3,104	3,253	3,635	3,849	3,833	3,790	3,475	3,512	3,284	3,829	3,563	3,307	28,230	27,111
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,647	12,192	13,881	14,664	13,846	13,836	13,715	13,402	13,779	13,307	14,339	12,819	13,968	108,183	108,453
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,614	4,128	4,986	5,611	5,022	4,914	4,529	4,790	5,058	4,580	4,772	4,591	4,551	38,594	35,472
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	55,253	60,838	59,587	59,617	58,499	59,304	57,964	61,794	59,735	63,715	61,481	64,288	473,282	497,958
511	Paper & paper products	3,226	2,911	3,139	3,213	3,112	3,184	3,181	3,211	3,115	2,858	3,245	2,952	2,991	25,177	23,323
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,337	2,057	2,266	2,335	2,264	2,259	2,370	2,342	2,194	2,194	2,403	2,130	2,207	18,230	16,889
514	Groceries & related products	18,913	16,956	18,894	18,910	19,683	19,283	20,167	20,297	18,369	17,543	18,758	18,284	18,601	153,103	142,907
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,872	6,846	7,404	6,608	6,988	6,041	6,178	5,260	6,399	5,799	7,049	8,210	8,256	53,197	65,450
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,638	2,559	3,111	3,221	3,560	3,598	3,621	3,597	3,670	3,813	3,109	3,284	3,860	25,905	25,322
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,825	7,729	9,735	10,081	9,691	9,592	9,304	8,386	9,009	8,602	8,473	7,270	9,377	72,343	70,990
	Inventories, total	137,103	137,385	138,407	138,205	136,087	137,340	137,684	138,354	132,424	133,789	136,122	136,376	137,139	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	86,586	87,701	88,610	89,624	89,665	90,450	90,998	91,612	87,178	87,642	87,298	87,019	86,984	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,989	16,466	16,524	16,562	16,968	16,714	16,861	14,987	15,932	15,880	15,656	16,311	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,362	3,207	3,202	3,126	3,142	3,021	3,085	3,131	3,308	3,246	3,337	3,239	3,375	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,778	8,726	8,333	8,365	8,380	8,498	8,348	8,156	8,710	8,692	8,349	8,395	8,698	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	12,161	12,181	12,475	13,011	12,418	12,769	13,450	13,324	13,160	13,184	13,055	12,705	12,448	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,637	5,888	6,057	6,111	6,160	6,050	6,051	6,099	5,914	5,770	5,759	5,737	5,590	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,562	30,193	30,515	30,674	31,026	30,920	30,905	31,351	29,725	29,495	29,772	30,134	29,915	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	50,517	49,684	49,797	48,581	46,422	46,890	46,686	46,742	45,246	46,147	48,824	49,357	50,155	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,116	3,137	3,169	3,157	3,117	3,158	3,160	3,188	3,028	2,957	2,983	3,061	3,077	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,388	10,735	10,735	10,803	10,661	10,872	10,684	10,615	9,441	9,610	10,399	10,419	10,275	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	8,864	8,100	7,770	7,027	5,559	5,702	5,480	5,405	5,339	5,998	7,357	8,148	8,759	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,404	3,574	3,640	3,718	3,647	3,764	3,656	3,499	3,591	3,599	3,836	3,808	3,312	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,766	9,796	10,067	9,751	9,008	8,645	8,445	8,725	8,737	9,026	9,237	9,174	9,451	(X)	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.22	1.34	1.21	1.19	1.18	1.20	1.19	1.24	1.14	1.20	1.12	1.20	1.17	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.73	1.85	1.67	1.59	1.62	1.61	1.62	1.70	1.61	1.68	1.52	1.66	1.65	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	1.45	1.59	1.43	1.34	1.30	1.30	1.23	1.40	1.30	1.57	1.29	1.35	1.43	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.89	1.82	1.68	1.51	1.49	1.36	1.46	1.42	1.61	1.62	1.46	1.58	1.71	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.79	1.89	1.70	1.75	1.84	1.79	1.78	1.78	1.68	1.63	1.62	1.90	1.85	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	1.73	1.75	1.62	1.78	1.72	1.65	1.74	1.76	1.76	1.69	1.53	1.61	1.55	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.90	1.86	1.68	1.60	1.58	1.60	1.76	1.68	1.76	1.50	1.61	1.69	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.34	2.48	2.20	2.09	2.24	2.23	2.25	2.34	2.16	2.22	2.08	2.35	2.14	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	.81	.90	.82	.82	.78	.80	.79	.81	.73	.77	.77	.80	.78	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	.97	1.08	1.01	.98	1.00	.99	.99	.99	.97	1.03	.92	1.04	1.03	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	.55	.63	.57	.57	.54	.56	.53	.52	.51	.55	.55	.57	.55	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.13	1.18	1.05	1.06	.80	.94	.89	1.03	.83	1.03	1.04	.99	1.06	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.29	1.40	1.17	1.15	1.02	1.05	1.01	.97	.98	.94	1.23	1.16	.86	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.25	1.27	1.03	.97	.93	.90	.91	1.04	.97	1.05	1.09	1.26	1.01	(X)	(X)

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*
x Cumulative data are not applicable for inventories or stock/sales ratios, cumulative seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. **Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers**

SIC code	Kind of business	Unadjusted					Adjusted[1]			
		Sales			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		Aug. 1986 from July 1986	Aug. 1986 from Aug. 1985	8 months 1986 from 8 months 1985	Aug. 1986 from July 1986	Aug. 1986 from Aug. 1985	Aug. 1986 from July 1986	Aug. 1986 from Aug. 1985	Aug. 1986 from July 1986	Aug. 1986 from Aug. 1985
	Total	-3.1	-3.7	-1.0	+.5	+4.5	+.1	-.6	+.7	+4.5
50	Durable goods	-4.0	-.8	+3.8	+.7	+5.1	-1.5	+2.6	+.7	+5.1
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	-11.1	+4.9	+8.0	+.9	+12.5	-2.0	+9.4	+2.4	+12.7
502	Furniture & home furnishings	+4.6	+7.6	+7.6	+1.5	-5.4	+4.4	+9.6	-.9	-5.5
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	-3.2	+3.6	+9.6	(S)	(S)	-2.5	+6.5	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	-2.6	-11.8	-7.7	-2.3	-6.4	-3.9	-9.5	-3.0	-6.5
506	Electrical goods	-2.1	+1.4	+4.4	-.9	+1.2	-.9	+3.6	-.3	+1.1
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	-8.3	-1.1	+4.1	+.8	+3.1	-4.8	+2.6	+1.9	+3.2
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	-2.3	-2.7	-.2	+1.4	+5.5	-1.0	+.4	+1.2	+5.4
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	+5.8	-5.3	+8.8	(S)	(S)	-1.5	-.5	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	-2.3	-6.2	-5.0	+.1	+3.3	+1.6	-3.4	+.8	+3.3
511	Paper & paper products	+.9	+3.1	+7.9	+.9	+5.3	+.6	+7.1	-.2	+5.3
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	-1.2	+6.7	+7.9	(S)	(S)	+2.5	+10.5	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	+.6	+10.5	+7.1	-.6	+12.4	+4.0	+12.9	+.6	+12.4
515	Farm product raw materials	-14.9	-17.8	-18.7	-1.4	+1.2	-7.8	-12.7	-5.6	+1.2
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	-.7	-2.0	+2.3	-4.3	-2.6	+7.2	+2.4	-1.1	-2.4
519	Misc. nondurable goods	-9.9	-6.9	+1.9	+3.3	-.1	-5.6	-3.9	+4.4	-.2

S Data do not meet publication standards.

[1]Adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972*, and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +1.0 percent to -0.4 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.4 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +0.3 percent to -0.8 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarly, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Classification Differences Between Monthly Survey and 1977 and 1982 Censuses of Wholesale Trade

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

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[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

[3]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program*, U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series*, Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.9	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and drug sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

Table 4. **Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers**

SIC code	Kind of business	1985					1986								
		Aug.[r]	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July[r]	Aug.[r]	Sept.
	Sales,[1] total	1.006	.977	1.063	.984	1.002	.976	.905	1.012	1.008	1.039	1.012	1.007	.975	1.001
50	Durable goods	1.027	.996	1.092	.981	.976	.938	.893	1.009	1.016	1.035	1.029	1.019	.993	1.019
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	.992	.909	1.080	.986	.976	.980	.881	1.006	1.043	1.080	1.044	1.048	.951	.931
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.019	1.009	1.159	1.001	.948	.898	.898	.983	1.059	1.028	1.028	.998	1.000	1.035
503	Lumber & other construction mat	1.125	1.059	1.139	.989	.859	.854	.799	.915	1.012	1.065	1.097	1.104	1.095	1.064
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.028	1.008	1.016	.904	.961	.997	.937	1.057	1.030	1.023	1.037	.988	1.001	1.016
506	Electrical goods	1.030	1.040	1.106	1.018	1.029	.909	.897	.994	.959	.956	1.003	1.020	1.008	1.073
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.060	1.002	1.106	.978	.940	.948	.890	.951	1.023	1.029	1.036	1.061	1.022	1.023
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.015	.994	1.066	.951	1.010	.934	.907	1.016	1.036	1.040	1.027	.996	.983	1.024
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	1.077	1.033	1.128	1.008	.964	.977	.895	1.018	1.025	1.019	.971	.955	1.025	1.026
51	Nondurable goods	.990	.962	1.041	.986	1.022	1.000	.915	1.017	1.005	1.056	1.002	.999	.961	.988
511	Paper & paper products	1.048	.982	1.079	.979	.971	1.009	.931	.992	1.009	.999	.999	1.006	1.009	1.020
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	.999	1.007	1.085	.962	.998	1.027	.919	.990	1.031	.991	.999	1.001	.965	1.031
514	Groceries & related products	1.025	.976	1.035	.979	.989	.990	.914	.997	1.009	1.052	1.004	1.036	1.003	.993
515	Farm product raw materials	.893	.851	1.032	1.100	1.113	1.079	.963	1.055	.946	1.110	.896	.911	.841	.890
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.075	.988	1.066	1.026	1.165	.806	.770	.912	.966	1.056	1.067	1.110	1.029	1.026
519	Misc. nondurable goods	.986	.953	1.003	.931	.990	.895	.848	1.040	1.064	1.212	1.082	1.000	.955	.976
	Inventories,[1] total	.983	.995	1.010	1.012	1.008	1.003	1.006	1.009	1.008	.991	.989	.985	.983	.994
50	Durable goods	1.002	1.011	1.003	.997	.997	.986	.994	1.001	1.004	.998	1.005	1.002	1.002	1.010
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	.961	1.018	1.015	1.008	1.018	1.000	1.005	1.008	1.011	.988	.998	.973	.959	1.017
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.013	1.005	.994	.987	1.002	.996	1.019	.998	.982	.989	1.002	.990	1.014	1.008
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.018	1.016	.991	1.001	1.005	.989	.995	.992	.978	.995	1.011	1.012	1.019	1.011
506	Electrical goods	1.022	1.027	1.025	1.002	.989	.972	.966	.972	.997	.991	1.003	1.030	1.023	1.030
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip	1.000	.986	.981	.983	.968	.980	1.005	1.024	1.040	1.030	1.002	1.010	.999	.986
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.001	1.000	1.002	.989	.997	.985	.993	1.008	1.005	1.005	1.013	1.000	1.002	.999
51	Nondurable goods	.948	.967	1.022	1.038	1.030	1.035	1.028	1.026	1.016	.974	.961	.954	.948	.966
511	Paper & paper products	1.017	.992	.989	1.017	.992	.988	.998	.994	.996	1.007	1.010	1.006	1.017	.988
514	Groceries & related products	.969	.995	1.043	1.051	1.001	.979	1.008	.994	.990	.998	.997	.981	.969	.991
515	Farm product raw materials	.800	.877	1.066	1.197	1.225	1.240	1.157	1.095	.986	.801	.777	.766	.800	.876
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	.996	1.000	1.071	1.068	.912	.932	.953	.979	1.020	1.001	1.027	1.027	.994	1.000
519	Misc. nondurable goods	.931	.933	.964	.957	.998	1.038	1.075	1.118	1.090	.995	.964	.942	.932	.935

[r]Revised.

[1]Adjusted sales and inventory data shown in table 1A are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

NOTE: Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some groups not shown separately. The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through the current month preliminary estimate.

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Monthly Wholesale Trade

Sales and Inventories

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

September 1986

Issued November 1986
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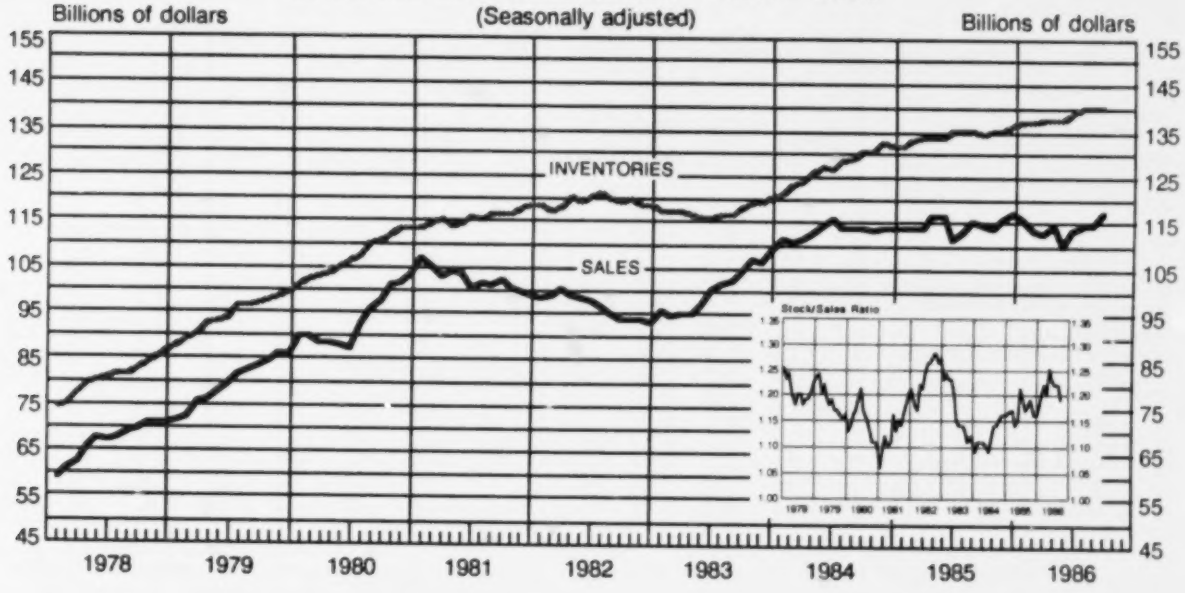
Sales. September 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were $117.3 billion, up 2.5 percent from the revised August level of $114.5 billion and up 2.5 percent from a year ago. The August preliminary estimate was revised downward by less than $0.1 billion or about 0.03 percent. September sales of durable goods increased 4.2 percent from August and were 7.6 percent above a year ago. The durable goods group showed significant increases in miscellaneous durable goods, up 16.0 percent, and hardware, plumbing, and heating equipment and supplies which increased 7.3 percent. September sales of nondurable goods were little changed from August and from a year ago.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $139.9 billion at the end of September, little changed from the revised August level and up 4.0 percent from a year ago. The August preliminary estimate was revised downward by $1.0 billion or about 0.7 percent. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers were little changed from the August level and were up 4.3 percent from a year ago. Inventories of nondurable goods wholesalers were little changed from August and from a year ago.

Stock/Sales Ratio. The September stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.19, down from the August ratio of 1.22 but above the year ago ratio of 1.17.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



The *Monthly Wholesale Trade* Report for October is scheduled to be released December 11, 1986, at 10:00 a.m.

U.S. Department of Commerce
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Address inquiries concerning this report to **Shirley Roberts**, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-3916 or 763-3917.

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Table 1A. Adjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986									1985			
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.[p]	Sept.[r]	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Sales, total	115,648	113,380	112,495	114,608	109,870	112,873	114,375	114,482	117,300	114,473	113,675	115,762	116,852
50	Durable goods	53,428	52,994	52,674	55,317	53,415	54,491	55,012	53,951	56,241	52,249	52,469	53,408	53,948
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,318	11,398	11,416	11,856	11,755	12,490	12,938	12,612	12,920	11,105	11,383	11,726	11,700
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,983	1,959	1,942	1,950	2,052	2,155	2,112	2,181	2,317	1,950	1,978	2,044	2,083
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,046	4,065	3,975	4,229	4,248	4,013	4,154	4,121	4,255	3,809	3,823	3,900	3,814
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,919	4,936	4,624	4,628	4,452	4,583	4,755	4,544	4,667	5,191	5,082	4,886	4,884
506	Electrical goods	7,716	7,773	7,764	7,632	7,531	7,718	7,579	7,561	7,703	7,395	7,720	7,771	7,799
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,488	3,421	3,553	3,741	3,700	3,572	3,461	3,712	3,301	3,462	3,643	3,518
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,541	13,442	13,662	14,154	13,313	13,472	13,770	13,662	13,703	13,414	13,451	13,479	13,830
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,723	4,612	4,898	5,474	4,928	5,061	4,742	4,786	5,554	4,370	4,230	4,555	4,721
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	60,386	59,821	59,291	56,455	58,382	59,363	60,531	61,059	62,224	61,206	62,354	62,904
511	Paper & paper products	3,197	3,127	3,164	3,184	3,115	3,187	3,162	3,258	3,199	2,913	3,007	3,015	3,080
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,276	2,238	2,289	2,265	2,285	2,261	2,368	2,430	2,406	2,185	2,215	2,214	2,211
514	Groceries & related products	19,104	18,551	18,951	18,741	18,710	19,206	19,466	20,323	20,173	18,011	18,124	18,676	18,808
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,296	7,109	7,018	6,985	6,295	6,742	6,782	6,292	6,664	6,830	6,830	7,464	7,418
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,273	3,323	3,411	3,334	3,371	3,372	3,262	3,486	3,253	3,855	2,917	3,201	3,313
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,743	9,114	9,361	9,475	7,996	8,865	9,304	8,842	8,912	9,103	8,448	7,809	9,472
	Inventories, total	136,624	136,561	137,056	137,083	137,506	138,793	139,753	139,742	139,907	134,496	134,810	134,831	135,940
50	Durable goods	87,815	88,230	88,521	89,267	89,845	90,000	90,816	90,811	90,542	86,774	87,037	87,281	87,246
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,909	16,335	16,344	16,763	17,002	17,178	17,466	17,449	15,681	15,645	15,532	16,023
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,376	3,147	3,208	3,183	3,177	3,015	3,116	3,191	3,224	3,208	3,357	3,282	3,368
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,876	8,770	8,400	8,553	8,422	8,406	8,249	7,843	7,759	8,580	8,425	8,387	8,655
506	Electrical goods	12,511	12,610	12,834	13,050	12,531	12,731	13,058	12,996	13,201	12,775	12,737	12,680	12,586
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,752	5,859	5,915	5,876	5,981	6,038	5,991	6,090	6,150	5,852	5,871	5,836	5,775
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,012	30,406	30,273	30,521	30,872	30,523	30,905	31,010	30,501	29,584	29,713	30,469	30,005
51	Nondurable goods	48,809	48,331	48,535	47,816	47,661	48,793	48,937	48,931	49,365	47,722	47,773	47,550	48,694
511	Paper & paper products	3,154	3,143	3,188	3,170	3,095	3,127	3,141	3,150	3,229	2,987	3,016	3,010	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,611	10,650	10,800	10,912	10,682	10,905	10,891	10,937	11,025	9,707	9,970	9,913	10,265
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,148	7,001	7,096	7,127	6,940	7,338	7,154	6,602	6,519	6,894	6,902	6,807	7,150
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,652	3,750	3,718	3,645	3,643	3,665	3,560	3,547	3,587	3,581	3,582	3,566	3,632
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,408	9,113	9,004	8,946	9,053	8,968	8,965	9,147	9,275	9,592	9,582	9,586	9,470
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.18	1.20	1.22	1.20	1.25	1.23	1.22	1.22	1.19	1.17	1.19	1.16	1.16
50	Durable goods	1.64	1.66	1.68	1.61	1.68	1.65	1.65	1.68	1.61	1.66	1.66	1.63	1.62
501	Motor vehicles & auto equip.	1.42	1.40	1.43	1.38	1.43	1.36	1.33	1.38	1.35	1.41	1.37	1.32	1.37
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.70	1.61	1.65	1.63	1.55	1.40	1.48	1.46	1.39	1.65	1.70	1.61	1.62
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.80	1.78	1.82	1.85	1.89	1.83	1.73	1.73	1.66	1.65	1.66	1.72	1.77
506	Electrical goods	1.62	1.62	1.65	1.71	1.66	1.65	1.72	1.72	1.71	1.73	1.65	1.63	1.61
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.66	1.68	1.73	1.65	1.60	1.63	1.68	1.76	1.66	1.77	1.70	1.60	1.64
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.26	2.22	2.16	2.32	2.27	2.24	2.27	2.23	2.21	2.21	2.26	2.17
51	Nondurable goods	.78	.80	.81	.81	.84	.84	.82	.81	.81	.77	.78	.76	.77
511	Paper & paper products	.99	1.01	1.01	1.00	.99	.98	.99	.97	1.01	1.03	1.00	1.00	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	.56	.57	.57	.58	.57	.57	.56	.54	.55	.54	.55	.53	.55
515	Farm-product raw materials	.98	.98	1.01	1.02	1.10	1.09	1.05	1.05	.98	1.01	1.01	.91	.96
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.13	1.09	1.09	1.08	1.09	1.09	1.02	1.10	.93	1.23	1.11	1.10
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.08	1.00	.96	.94	1.13	1.01	.96	1.03	1.04	1.05	1.13	1.23	1.00

[r]Revised.

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 1B. Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data not adjusted for seasonal variation or trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986									1985				Total 9 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.[P]	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1986	1985
	Sales, total	112,335	102,577	113,986	115,789	114,902	114,570	115,361	111,946	118,106	111,775	121,011	113,874	116,941	1,019,572	1,022,100
50	Durable goods	50,115	47,324	53,148	56,202	55,285	56,071	56,057	53,897	57,535	52,040	57,296	52,393	52,653	485,634	464,407
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	11,092	10,042	11,484	12,366	12,695	13,040	13,559	11,981	12,054	10,128	12,294	11,562	11,419	108,313	99,297
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,781	1,759	1,909	2,065	2,109	2,215	2,108	2,150	2,442	1,999	2,293	2,046	1,975	18,538	17,007
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,455	3,248	3,637	4,280	4,524	4,402	4,586	4,504	4,621	4,060	4,354	3,857	3,276	37,257	33,773
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,904	4,625	4,888	4,767	4,554	4,753	4,698	4,503	4,868	5,347	5,163	4,417	4,694	42,560	46,239
506	Electrical goods	7,014	6,972	7,717	7,319	7,200	7,741	7,731	7,606	8,335	7,780	8,538	7,911	8,025	67,635	64,530
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,291	3,104	3,253	3,635	3,849	3,833	3,790	3,554	3,779	3,284	3,829	3,563	3,307	32,088	30,395
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,647	12,192	13,881	14,664	13,846	13,836	13,715	13,416	14,046	13,307	14,339	12,819	13,968	122,243	121,760
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,614	4,128	4,986	5,611	5,022	4,914	4,529	4,781	5,871	4,580	4,772	4,591	4,551	44,456	40,052
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	55,253	60,838	59,587	59,617	58,499	59,304	58,049	60,571	59,735	63,715	61,481	64,288	533,938	557,693
511	Paper & paper products	3,226	2,911	3,139	3,213	3,112	3,184	3,181	3,313	3,237	2,858	3,245	2,952	2,991	28,516	26,181
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,337	2,057	2,266	2,335	2,264	2,259	2,370	2,347	2,485	2,194	2,403	2,130	2,207	20,720	19,083
514	Groceries & related products	18,913	16,956	18,894	18,910	19,683	19,283	20,167	20,404	20,032	17,543	18,758	18,284	18,601	173,242	160,450
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,872	6,846	7,404	6,608	6,988	6,041	6,178	5,304	6,024	5,799	7,049	8,210	8,256	59,265	71,249
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,638	2,559	3,111	3,221	3,560	3,598	3,621	3,591	3,325	3,813	3,109	3,284	3,860	29,224	29,135
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,825	7,729	9,735	10,081	9,691	9,592	9,304	8,418	8,707	8,602	8,473	7,270	9,377	81,082	79,592
	Inventories, total	137,103	137,385	138,407	138,205	136,087	137,340	137,684	137,331	139,183	133,789	136,122	136,376	137,139	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	86,586	87,701	88,610	89,624	89,665	90,450	90,998	90,993	91,447	87,642	87,298	87,019	86,984	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,989	16,466	16,524	16,562	16,968	16,714	16,767	17,728	15,932	15,880	15,656	16,311	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,362	3,207	3,202	3,126	3,142	3,021	3,085	3,239	3,259	3,246	3,337	3,239	3,375	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,778	8,726	8,333	8,365	8,380	8,498	8,348	7,976	7,852	8,692	8,349	8,395	8,698	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	12,161	12,181	12,475	13,011	12,418	12,769	13,450	13,269	13,637	13,184	13,065	12,705	12,448	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,637	5,886	6,057	6,111	6,160	6,050	6,051	6,078	6,058	5,770	5,759	5,737	5,590	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,562	30,193	30,515	30,674	31,026	30,920	30,905	31,103	30,348	29,495	29,772	30,134	29,915	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	50,517	49,684	49,797	48,581	46,422	46,890	46,686	46,338	47,736	46,147	48,824	49,357	50,155	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,116	3,137	3,169	3,157	3,117	3,158	3,160	3,194	3,193	2,957	2,983	3,061	3,077	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,388	10,735	10,735	10,800	10,661	10,872	10,684	10,587	10,904	9,610	10,399	10,419	10,275	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	8,864	8,100	7,770	7,027	5,559	5,702	5,480	5,288	5,665	5,998	7,357	8,148	8,759	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,404	3,574	3,640	3,718	3,647	3,764	3,656	3,522	3,609	3,599	3,836	3,808	3,312	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,766	9,796	10,067	9,751	9,008	8,645	8,445	8,470	8,728	9,026	9,237	9,174	9,451	(X)	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.22	1.34	1.21	1.19	1.18	1.20	1.19	1.23	1.18	1.20	1.12	1.20	1.17	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.73	1.85	1.67	1.59	1.62	1.61	1.62	1.69	1.59	1.68	1.52	1.66	1.65	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	1.45	1.59	1.43	1.34	1.30	1.30	1.23	1.40	1.47	1.57	1.29	1.35	1.43	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.89	1.82	1.68	1.51	1.49	1.36	1.46	1.51	1.33	1.62	1.46	1.58	1.71	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.79	1.89	1.70	1.75	1.84	1.79	1.78	1.77	1.61	1.63	1.62	1.90	1.86	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	1.73	1.75	1.62	1.78	1.72	1.65	1.74	1.74	1.64	1.69	1.53	1.61	1.55	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.90	1.86	1.68	1.60	1.58	1.60	1.71	1.60	1.76	1.50	1.61	1.69	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.34	2.48	2.20	2.09	2.24	2.23	2.25	2.32	2.16	2.22	2.08	2.35	2.14	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	.81	.90	.82	.82	.78	.80	.79	.80	.79	.77	.77	.80	.78	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	.97	1.08	1.01	.98	1.00	.99	.99	.96	.99	1.03	.92	1.04	1.03	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	.55	.63	.57	.57	.54	.56	.53	.52	.54	.55	.55	.57	.55	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.13	1.18	1.05	1.06	.80	.94	.89	1.00	.94	1.03	1.04	.99	1.06	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.29	1.40	1.17	1.15	1.02	1.05	1.01	.98	1.09	.94	1.23	1.16	.86	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.25	1.27	1.03	.97	.93	.90	.91	1.01	1.00	1.05	1.09	1.26	1.01	(X)	(X)

[P]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*
x Cumulative data are not applicable for inventories or stock/sales ratios, cumulative seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of business	Unadjusted					Adjusted[1]			
		Sales			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		Sept. 1986 from Aug. 1986	Sept. 1986 from Sept. 1985	9 months 1986 from 9 months 1985	Sept. 1986 from Aug. 1986	Sept. 1986 from Sept. 1985	Sept. 1986 from Aug. 1986	Sept. 1986 from Sept. 1985	Sept. 1986 from Aug. 1986	Sept. 1986 from Sept. 1985
	Total	+5.5	+5.7	-.2	+1.3	+4.0	+2.5	+2.5	+.1	+4.0
50	Durable goods	+6.7	+10.6	+4.6	+.5	+4.3	+4.2	+7.6	-.3	+4.3
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	+.5	+19.0	+9.1	+5.7	+11.3	+2.4	+16.3	-.1	+11.3
502	Furniture & home furnishings	+13.6	+22.2	+9.0	+.6	+.4	+6.2	+18.8	+1.0	+.5
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	+2.6	+13.8	+10.3	(S)	(S)	+3.3	+11.7	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	+8.1	-9.0	-8.0	-1.6	-9.7	+2.7	-10.1	-1.1	-9.6
506	Electrical goods	+9.6	+7.1	+4.8	+2.8	+3.4	+1.9	+4.2	+1.6	+3.3
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	+6.3	+15.1	+5.6	-.3	+5.0	+7.3	+12.5	+1.0	+5.1
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	+4.7	+5.6	+.4	-2.4	+2.9	+.3	+2.2	-1.6	+3.1
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	+22.8	+28.2	+11.0	(S)	(S)	+16.0	+27.1	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	+4.3	+1.4	-4.3	+3.0	+3.4	+.9	-1.9	+.9	+3.4
511	Paper & paper products	-2.3	+13.3	+8.9	.0	+8.0	-1.8	+9.8	+2.6	+8.1
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	+5.9	+13.3	+8.6	(S)	(S)	-1.0	+10.1	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	-1.8	+14.2	+8.0	+3.0	+13.5	-.7	+12.0	+.8	+13.6
515	Farm-product raw materials	+13.6	+3.9	-16.8	+7.1	-5.6	+5.9	-2.4	-1.3	-5.4
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	-7.4	-12.8	+.3	+2.5	+.3	-6.7	-15.6	+1.1	+.2
519	Misc. nondurable goods	+3.4	+1.2	+1.9	+3.0	-3.3	+.8	-2.1	+1.4	-3.3

S Data do not meet publication standards.

[1]Adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972,* and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +1.0 percent to -0.4 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.4 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +0.3 percent to -0.8 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarily, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Classification Differences Between Monthly Survey and 1977 and 1982 Censuses of Wholesale Trade

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

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[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

[3]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program,* U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series,* Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. **Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories**

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.9	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

Table 4. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of business	1985				1986									
		Sept.[r]	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.[r]	Sept.[r]	Oct.
	Sales,[1] total	.977	1.063	.984	1.002	.976	.905	1.012	1.008	1.039	1.012	1.007	.972	1.007	1.056
50	Durable goods	.996	1.092	.981	.976	.938	.893	1.009	1.016	1.035	1.029	1.019	.999	1.023	1.089
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	.912	1.080	.986	.976	.980	.881	1.006	1.043	1.080	1.044	1.048	.950	.933	1.081
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.025	1.159	1.001	.948	.898	.898	.983	1.059	1.028	1.028	.998	.986	1.054	1.151
503	Lumber & other construction mat	1.066	1.139	.989	.859	.854	.799	.915	1.012	1.065	1.097	1.104	1.093	1.086	1.145
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.030	1.016	.904	.961	.997	.937	1.057	1.030	1.023	1.037	.988	.991	1.043	1.034
506	Electrical goods	1.052	1.106	1.018	1.029	.909	.897	.994	.959	.956	1.003	1.020	1.006	1.082	1.067
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	.995	1.106	.978	.940	.948	.890	.951	1.023	1.029	1.036	1.061	1.027	1.018	1.090
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	.992	1.066	.951	1.010	.934	.907	1.016	1.036	1.040	1.027	.996	.982	1.025	1.056
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	1.048	1.128	1.008	.964	.977	.895	1.018	1.025	1.019	.971	.955	.999	1.057	1.128
51	Nondurable goods	.960	1.041	.986	1.022	1.000	.915	1.017	1.005	1.056	1.002	.999	.959	.992	1.031
511	Paper & paper products	.981	1.079	.979	.971	1.009	.931	.992	1.009	999	999	1.006	1.017	1.012	1.075
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	1.004	1.085	.962	.998	1.027	.919	.990	1.031	.991	999	1.001	.966	1.033	1.071
514	Groceries & related products	.974	1.035	.979	.989	.990	.914	.997	1.009	1.052	1.004	1.036	1.004	.993	1.028
515	Farm-product raw materials	.849	1.032	1.100	1.113	1.079	.963	1.055	.946	1.110	.896	.911	.843	.904	1.004
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	.989	1.066	1.026	1.165	.806	.770	.912	.966	1.056	1.067	1.110	1.030	1.022	1.072
519	Misc. nondurable goods	.945	1.003	.931	.990	.895	.848	1.040	1.064	1.212	1.082	1.000	.952	.977	1.013
	Inventories,[1] total	.995	1.010	1.012	1.008	1.003	1.006	1.009	1.008	991	989	985	982	994	1.009
50	Durable goods	1.010	1.003	.997	.997	.986	.994	1.001	1.004	.998	1.005	1.002	1.002	1.010	1.002
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.016	1.015	1.008	1.018	1.000	1.005	1.008	1.011	988	998	973	960	1.016	1.014
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.012	.994	.987	1.002	.996	1.019	.998	.982	989	1.002	990	1.015	1.011	998
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.013	991	1.001	1.005	989	995	992	978	995	1.011	1.012	1.017	1.012	986
506	Electrical goods	1.032	1.025	1.002	989	972	966	972	997	991	1.003	1.030	1.021	1.033	1.026
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip	986	981	983	968	980	1.005	1.024	1.040	1.030	1.002	1.010	998	985	980
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	997	1.002	989	997	985	993	1.008	1.005	1.005	1.013	1.000	1.003	995	1.002
51	Nondurable goods	967	1.022	1.038	1.030	1.035	1.028	1.026	1.016	974	961	954	947	967	1.021
511	Paper & paper products	990	989	1.017	992	988	998	994	996	1.007	1.010	1.006	1.014	989	985
514	Groceries & related products	990	1.043	1.051	1.001	979	1.008	994	990	998	997	981	968	989	1.040
515	Farm-product raw materials	870	1.066	1.197	1.225	1.240	1.157	1.095	986	801	777	766	801	869	1.067
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.005	1.071	1.068	912	932	953	979	1.020	1.001	1.027	1.027	993	1.006	1.070
519	Misc. nondurable goods	941	964	957	998	1.038	1.075	1.118	1.090	995	964	942	926	941	968

[r]Revised.

[1]Adjusted sales and inventory data shown in table 1A are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

NOTE: Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some groups not shown separately. The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through the current month preliminary estimate.

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Monthly Wholesale Trade

Sales and Inventories

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October 1986

Issued December 1986
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NOTICE: Beginning with the January 1987 publication, released in late March, estimates of total inventories will be on a non-LIFO basis. This change will improve the monthly consistency of the estimates. Comparable historic data will be available from December 1980.

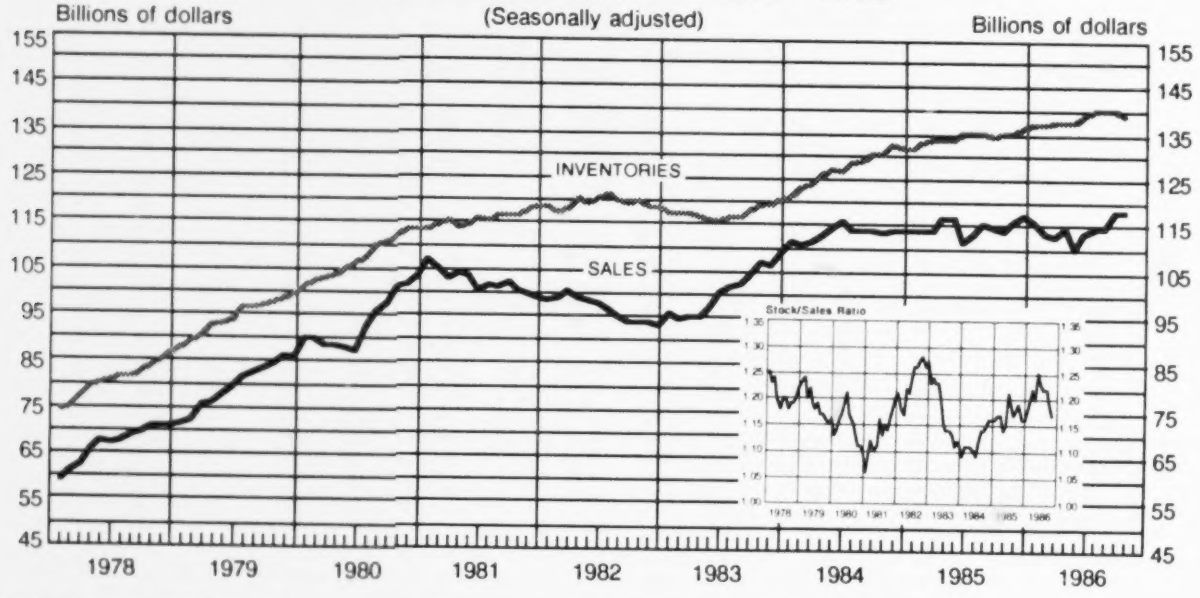
Sales. October 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were $118.0 billion, little changed from the revised September level and up 3.5 percent from a year ago. The September preliminary estimate was revised upward by $0.3 billion or about 0.3 percent. October sales of durable goods were little changed from September and were up 8.3 percent from a year ago. October sales of nondurable goods were little changed from September and from a year ago.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $138.6 billion at the end of October, down 0.9 percent from the revised September level of $139.9 but up 2.6 percent from a year ago. The September preliminary estimate was revised downward by less than $0.1 billion or about 0.02 percent. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers were little changed from the September level and were up 4.3 percent from a year ago. Inventories of nondurable goods wholesalers decreased 2.4 percent from September and were little changed from a year ago.

Stock/Sales Ratio. The October stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.17, down from the September ratio of 1.19 and the same as the year ago ratio.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



The *Monthly Wholesale Trade* Report for November is scheduled to be released January 8, 1987, at 10:00 a.m.

U.S. Department of Commerce
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Address inquiries concerning this report to **Shirley Roberts,** Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-3916 or 763-3917.

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Table 1A. **Adjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985**

(Data adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986										1985		
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.[p]	Oct.[r]	Nov.	Dec.
	Sales, total	115,648	113,380	112,495	114,608	109,870	112,873	114,375	114,482	117,594	117,984	113,947	115,762	116,852
50	Durable goods	53,428	52,994	52,674	55,317	53,415	54,491	55,012	53,951	56,638	56,951	52,565	53,408	53,948
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,318	11,398	11,416	11,856	11,755	12,490	12,938	12,612	13,043	13,314	11,258	11,726	11,700
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,983	1,959	1,942	1,950	2,052	2,155	2,112	2,181	2,343	2,220	1,970	2,044	2,083
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,046	4,065	3,975	4,229	4,248	4,013	4,154	4,121	4,217	4,246	3,799	3,900	3,814
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,919	4,936	4,624	4,628	4,452	4,583	4,755	4,544	4,751	4,838	5,017	4,886	4,884
506	Electrical goods	7,716	7,773	7,764	7,632	7,531	7,718	7,579	7,561	7,881	7,993	7,603	7,771	7,799
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,488	3,421	3,553	3,741	3,700	3,572	3,461	3,686	3,727	3,487	3,643	3,518
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,541	13,442	13,662	14,154	13,313	13,472	13,770	13,662	13,701	13,610	13,464	13,479	13,830
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,723	4,612	4,898	5,474	4,928	5,061	4,742	4,786	5,585	5,330	4,354	4,555	4,721
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	60,386	59,821	59,291	56,455	58,382	59,363	60,531	60,956	61,033	61,382	62,354	62,904
511	Paper & paper products	3,197	3,127	3,164	3,184	3,115	3,187	3,162	3,258	3,205	3,220	3,016	3,015	3,080
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,276	2,238	2,289	2,265	2,285	2,261	2,368	2,430	2,447	2,545	2,205	2,214	2,211
514	Groceries & related products	19,104	18,551	18,951	18,741	18,710	19,206	19,466	20,323	20,164	19,888	18,194	18,676	18,808
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,296	7,109	7,018	6,985	6,295	6,742	6,782	6,292	6,731	7,058	6,817	7,464	7,418
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,273	3,323	3,411	3,334	3,371	3,372	3,262	3,486	3,267	3,343	2,868	3,201	3,313
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,743	9,114	9,361	9,475	7,996	8,865	9,304	8,842	9,225	9,450	8,397	7,809	9,472
	Inventories, total	136,624	136,561	137,056	137,083	137,506	138,793	139,753	139,742	139,878	138,567	135,038	134,831	135,940
50	Durable goods	87,815	88,230	88,521	89,267	89,845	90,000	90,816	90,811	91,037	90,877	87,124	87,281	87,246
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,909	16,335	16,344	16,763	17,002	17,178	17,466	17,640	17,515	15,723	15,532	16,023
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,376	3,147	3,208	3,183	3,177	3,015	3,116	3,191	3,350	3,219	3,330	3,282	3,368
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,876	8,770	8,400	8,553	8,422	8,406	8,249	7,843	7,894	7,932	8,450	8,387	8,655
506	Electrical goods	12,511	12,610	12,834	13,050	12,531	12,731	13,058	12,996	13,347	13,324	12,749	12,680	12,586
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,752	5,859	5,915	5,876	5,981	6,038	5,991	6,090	6,002	5,968	5,877	5,836	5,775
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,012	30,406	30,273	30,521	30,872	30,523	30,905	31,010	30,388	30,016	29,772	30,469	30,005
51	Nondurable goods	48,809	48,331	48,535	47,816	47,661	48,793	48,937	48,931	48,841	47,690	47,914	47,550	48,694
511	Paper & paper products	3,154	3,143	3,188	3,170	3,095	3,127	3,141	3,150	3,147	3,166	3,025	3,010	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,611	10,650	10,800	10,912	10,682	10,905	10,891	10,937	10,941	10,894	9,989	9,913	10,265
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,148	7,001	7,096	7,127	6,940	7,338	7,154	6,602	6,390	6,237	6,927	6,807	7,150
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,652	3,750	3,718	3,645	3,643	3,665	3,560	3,547	3,565	3,477	3,598	3,566	3,632
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,408	9,113	9,004	8,946	9,053	8,968	8,965	9,147	9,437	9,288	9,533	9,586	9,470
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.18	1.20	1.22	1.20	1.25	1.23	1.22	1.22	1.19	1.17	1.19	1.16	1.16
50	Durable goods	1.64	1.66	1.68	1.61	1.68	1.65	1.65	1.68	1.61	1.60	1.66	1.63	1.62
501	Motor vehicles & auto equip.	1.42	1.40	1.43	1.38	1.43	1.36	1.33	1.38	1.35	1.32	1.40	1.32	1.37
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.70	1.61	1.65	1.63	1.55	1.40	1.48	1.46	1.43	1.45	1.69	1.61	1.62
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.80	1.78	1.82	1.85	1.89	1.83	1.73	1.73	1.66	1.64	1.68	1.72	1.77
506	Electrical goods	1.62	1.62	1.65	1.71	1.66	1.65	1.72	1.72	1.69	1.67	1.68	1.63	1.61
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.66	1.68	1.73	1.65	1.60	1.63	1.68	1.76	1.63	1.60	1.69	1.60	1.64
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.26	2.22	2.16	2.32	2.27	2.24	2.27	2.22	2.21	2.21	2.26	2.17
51	Nondurable goods	78	80	81	81	84	84	82	81	80	78	78	76	77
511	Paper & paper products	99	1.01	1.01	1.00	99	98	99	97	98	98	1.00	1.00	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	56	57	57	58	57	57	56	54	54	55	55	53	55
515	Farm-product raw materials	98	98	1.01	1.02	1.10	1.09	1.05	1.05	95	88	1.02	91	96
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.13	1.09	1.09	1.08	1.09	1.09	1.02	1.09	1.04	1.25	1.11	1.10
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.08	1.00	96	94	1.13	1.01	96	1.03	1.02	98	1.14	1.23	1.00

[r]Revised.

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 1B. **Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985**

(Data not adjusted for seasonal variation or trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986										1985			Total 10 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct[p]	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1986	1985
	Sales, total	112,335	102,577	113,986	115,789	114,902	114,570	115,361	111,946	118,531	124,408	121,011	113,874	116,941	1,144,405	1,143,111
50	Durable goods	50,115	47,324	53,148	56,202	55,285	56,071	56,057	53,897	57,941	61,849	57,296	52,393	52,653	547,889	521,703
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	11,092	10,042	11,484	12,366	12,695	13,040	13,559	11,981	12,169	14,459	12,294	11,562	11,419	122,887	111,591
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,781	1,759	1,909	2,065	2,109	2,215	2,108	2,150	2,444	2,558	2,293	2,046	1,975	21,098	19,300
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,455	3,248	3,637	4,280	4,524	4,402	4,586	4,504	4,538	4,896	4,354	3,857	3,276	42,070	38,127
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,904	4,625	4,888	4,767	4,554	4,753	4,698	4,503	4,951	5,031	5,163	4,417	4,694	47,674	51,402
506	Electrical goods	7,014	6,972	7,717	7,319	7,200	7,741	7,731	7,606	8,511	8,816	8,538	7,911	8,025	76,627	73,068
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,291	3,104	3,253	3,635	3,849	3,833	3,790	3,554	3,741	4,059	3,829	3,563	3,307	36,109	34,224
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,647	12,192	13,881	14,664	13,846	13,836	13,715	13,416	14,071	14,331	14,339	12,819	13,968	136,599	136,099
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,614	4,128	4,986	5,611	5,022	4,914	4,529	4,781	5,892	5,815	4,772	4,591	4,551	50,292	44,824
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	55,253	60,838	59,587	59,617	58,499	59,304	58,049	60,590	62,559	63,715	61,481	64,288	596,516	621,408
511	Paper & paper products	3,226	2,911	3,139	3,213	3,112	3,184	3,181	3,313	3,231	3,442	3,245	2,952	2,991	31,952	29,426
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,337	2,057	2,266	2,335	2,264	2,259	2,370	2,347	2,518	2,749	2,403	2,130	2,207	23,502	21,486
514	Groceries & related products	18,913	16,956	18,894	18,910	19,683	19,283	20,167	20,404	20,023	20,405	18,758	18,284	18,601	193,638	179,208
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,872	6,846	7,404	6,608	6,988	6,041	6,178	5,304	5,964	7,086	7,049	8,210	8,256	66,291	78,298
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,638	2,559	3,111	3,221	3,560	3,598	3,621	3,591	3,303	3,621	3,109	3,284	3,860	32,823	32,244
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,825	7,729	9,735	10,081	9,691	9,592	9,304	8,418	9,013	9,573	8,473	7,270	9,377	90,961	68,065
	Inventories, total	137,103	137,385	138,407	138,205	136,087	137,340	137,684	137,331	139,365	139,516	136,122	136,376	137,139	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	86,586	87,701	88,610	89,624	89,665	90,450	90,998	90,993	92,038	90,968	87,298	87,019	86,984	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,989	16,466	16,524	16,562	16,968	16,714	16,767	18,028	17,690	15,880	15,656	16,311	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,362	3,207	3,202	3,126	3,142	3,021	3,085	3,239	3,384	3,232	3,337	3,239	3,375	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,778	8,726	8,333	8,365	8,380	8,498	8,348	7,976	7,973	7,821	8,349	8,395	8,698	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	12,161	12,181	12,475	13,011	12,418	12,769	13,450	13,269	13,814	13,630	13,055	12,705	12,448	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,637	5,888	6,057	6,111	6,160	6,050	6,051	6,078	5,900	5,843	5,759	5,737	5,590	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,562	30,193	30,515	30,674	31,026	30,920	30,905	31,103	30,297	29,986	29,772	30,134	29,915	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	50,517	49,684	49,797	48,581	46,422	46,890	46,686	46,338	47,327	48,548	48,824	49,357	50,155	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,116	3,137	3,169	3,157	3,117	3,158	3,160	3,194	3,100	3,119	2,983	3,061	3,077	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,388	10,735	10,735	10,803	10,661	10,872	10,684	10,587	10,810	11,341	10,399	10,419	10,275	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	8,864	8,100	7,770	7,027	5,559	5,702	5,480	5,288	5,559	6,617	7,357	8,148	8,759	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,404	3,574	3,640	3,718	3,647	3,764	3,656	3,522	3,597	3,700	3,836	3,808	3,312	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,766	9,796	10,067	9,751	9,008	8,645	8,445	8,470	8,918	8,972	9,237	9,174	9,451	(X)	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.22	1.34	1.21	1.19	1.18	1.20	1.19	1.23	1.18	1.12	1.12	1.20	1.17	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.73	1.85	1.67	1.59	1.62	1.61	1.62	1.69	1.59	1.47	1.52	1.66	1.65	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	1.45	1.59	1.43	1.34	1.30	1.30	1.23	1.40	1.48	1.22	1.29	1.35	1.43	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.89	1.82	1.68	1.51	1.49	1.36	1.46	1.51	1.38	1.26	1.46	1.58	1.71	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.79	1.89	1.70	1.75	1.84	1.79	1.78	1.77	1.61	1.55	1.62	1.90	1.85	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	1.73	1.75	1.62	1.78	1.72	1.65	1.74	1.74	1.62	1.55	1.53	1.61	1.55	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.90	1.86	1.68	1.60	1.58	1.60	1.71	1.58	1.44	1.50	1.61	1.69	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.34	2.48	2.20	2.09	2.24	2.23	2.25	2.32	2.15	2.09	2.08	2.35	2.14	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	81	90	82	82	78	80	79	80	78	78	77	80	78	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	97	1.08	1.01	98	1.00	99	99	96	96	91	92	1.04	1.03	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	55	63	57	57	54	56	53	52	54	56	55	57	55	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.13	1.18	1.05	1.06	80	94	89	1.00	93	93	1.04	99	1.06	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.29	1.40	1.17	1.15	1.02	1.05	1.01	98	1.09	1.02	1.23	1.16	86	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.25	1.27	1.03	97	93	90	91	1.01	99	94	1.09	1.26	1.01	(X)	(X)

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.
x Cumulative data are not applicable for inventories or stock/sales ratios, cumulative seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. **Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers**

SIC code	Kind of business	Unadjusted					Adjusted[1]			
		Sales			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		Oct.1986 from Sept.1986	Oct.1986 from Oct.1985	10 months 1986 from 10 months 1985	Oct.1986 from Sept.1986	Oct.1986 from Oct.1985	Oct.1986 from Sept.1986	Oct.1986 from Oct.1985	Oct.1986 from Sept.1986	Oct.1986 from Oct.1985
	Total	+5.0	+2.8	+.1	+.1	+2.5	+.3	+3.5	-.9	+2.6
50	Durable goods	+6.7	+7.9	+5.0	-1.2	+4.2	+.6	+8.3	-.2	+4.3
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	+18.8	+17.6	+10.1	-1.9	+11.4	+2.1	+18.3	-.7	+11.4
502	Furniture & home furnishings	+4.7	+11.6	+9.3	-4.5	3.1	-5.2	+12.7	-3.9	-3.3
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	+7.9	+12.4	+10.3	(S)	(S)	+.7	+11.8	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	+1.6	-2.6	-7.3	-1.9	-6.3	+1.8	-3.6	+.5	-6.1
506	Electrical goods	+3.6	+3.3	+4.9	-1.3	+4.4	+1.4	+5.1	-.2	+4.5
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	+8.5	+6.0	+5.5	-1.0	+1.5	+1.1	+6.9	-.6	+1.5
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	+1.8	-.1	+.4	-1.0	+.7	-.7	+1.1	-1.2	+.8
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	-1.3	+21.9	+12.2	(S)	(S)	-4.6	+22.4	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	+3.2	-1.8	-4.0	+2.6	-.6	+.1	-.6	-2.4	-.5
511	Paper & paper products	+.6	+6.1	+8.6	+.6	+4.6	+.5	+6.8	+.6	+4.7
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	+9.2	+14.4	+9.4	(S)	(S)	+4.0	+15.4	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	+1.9	+8.8	+8.1	+4.9	+9.1	-1.4	+9.3	-.4	+9.1
515	Farm product raw materials	+18.8	+.5	-15.3	+19.0	-10.1	+4.9	+3.5	-2.4	-10.0
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	+9.6	+16.5	+1.8	+2.9	-3.5	+2.3	+16.6	-2.5	-3.4
519	Misc. nondurable goods	+6.2	+13.0	+3.3	+.6	-2.9	+2.4	+12.5	-1.6	-2.6

S Data do not meet publication standards.

[1]Adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading day differences.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972*, and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +1.0 percent to -0.4 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.4 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +0.3 percent to -0.8 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarily, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Classification Differences Between Monthly Survey and 1977 and 1982 Censuses of Wholesale Trade

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

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[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

[3]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program,* U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series,* Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. **Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories**

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.9	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

Table 4. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of business	1985			1986									
		Oct.[r]	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.[r]	Oct.[r]	Nov.
	Sales,[1] total	1.063	984	1.002	976	905	1.012	1.008	1.039	1.012	1.007	972	1.008	1.052	961
50	Durable goods	1.090	981	976	938	893	1.009	1.016	1.035	1.029	1.019	999	1.023	1.086	959
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.092	986	976	980	881	1.006	1.043	1.080	1.044	1.048	950	933	1.086	967
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.164	1.001	948	898	898	983	1.059	1.028	1.028	998	986	1.043	1.152	989
503	Lumber & other construction mat	1.146	989	859	854	799	915	1.012	1.065	1.097	1.104	1.093	1.076	1.153	967
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.029	904	861	997	937	1.057	1.030	1.023	1.037	988	991	1.042	1.040	883
506	Electrical goods	1.123	1.018	1.029	909	897	994	959	956	1.003	1.020	1.006	1.080	1.103	1.020
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.098	978	940	948	890	951	1.023	1.029	1.036	1.061	1.027	1.015	1.089	960
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.065	951	1.010	934	907	1.016	1.036	1.040	1.027	996	982	1.027	1.053	929
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	1.096	1.008	964	977	895	1.018	1.025	1.019	971	955	899	1.055	1.091	972
51	Nondurable goods	1.038	986	1.022	1.000	915	1.017	1.005	1.056	1.002	999	959	994	1.025	967
511	Paper & paper products	1.076	979	971	1.009	931	992	1.009	999	999	1.006	1.017	1.008	1.369	948
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	1.090	962	998	1.027	919	990	1.031	991	999	1.001	966	1.029	1.080	944
514	Groceries & related products	1.031	979	989	990	914	997	1.009	1.052	1.004	1.036	1.004	993	1.026	965
515	Farm product raw materials	1.034	1.100	1.113	1.079	963	1.055	946	1.110	896	911	843	886	1.004	1.071
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.084	1.026	1.165	806	770	912	966	1.056	1.067	1.110	1.030	1.011	1.083	988
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.009	931	990	895	848	1.040	1.064	1.212	1.082	1.000	952	977	1.013	891
	Inventories,[1] total	1.008	1.012	1.008	1.003	1.006	1.009	1.008	991	989	985	982	996	1.007	1.011
50	Durable goods	1.002	997	997	986	994	1.001	1.004	998	1.005	1.002	1.002	1.011	1.001	996
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.010	1.008	1.018	1.000	1.005	1.008	1.011	988	998	973	960	1.022	1.010	1.007
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.002	987	1.002	996	1.019	998	982	989	1.002	990	1.015	1.010	1.004	992
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	988	1.001	1.005	989	995	992	978	995	1.011	1.012	1.017	1.010	986	998
506	Electrical goods	1.024	1.002	989	972	966	972	997	991	1.003	1.030	1.021	1.035	1.023	1.001
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip	980	983	968	980	1.005	1.024	1.040	1.030	1.002	1.010	998	983	979	981
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.000	989	997	985	993	1.008	1.005	1.005	1.013	1.000	1.003	997	999	987
51	Nondurable goods	1.019	1.038	1.030	1.035	1.028	1.026	1.016	974	961	954	947	969	1.018	1.037
511	Paper & paper products	986	1.017	992	988	998	994	996	1.007	1.010	1.006	1.014	985	985	1.014
514	Groceries & related products	1.041	1.051	1.001	979	1.008	994	990	998	997	981	968	988	1.041	1.049
515	Farm product raw materials	1.062	1.197	1.225	1.240	1.157	1.095	986	801	777	766	801	870	1.061	1.198
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.066	1.068	912	932	953	979	1.020	1.001	1.027	1.027	993	1.009	1.064	1.065
519	Misc. nondurable goods	969	957	998	1.038	1.075	1.118	1.090	995	964	942	926	945	966	962

[r]Revised.

[1]Adjusted sales and inventory data shown in table 1A are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

NOTE: Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some groups not shown separately. The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through the current month preliminary estimate.

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Monthly Wholesale Trade

Sales and Inventories

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

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NOTICE: Beginning with the January 1987 publication, released in late March, estimates of total inventories will be on a non-LIFO basis. This change will improve the monthly consistency of the estimates. Comparable historic data will be available from December 1980.

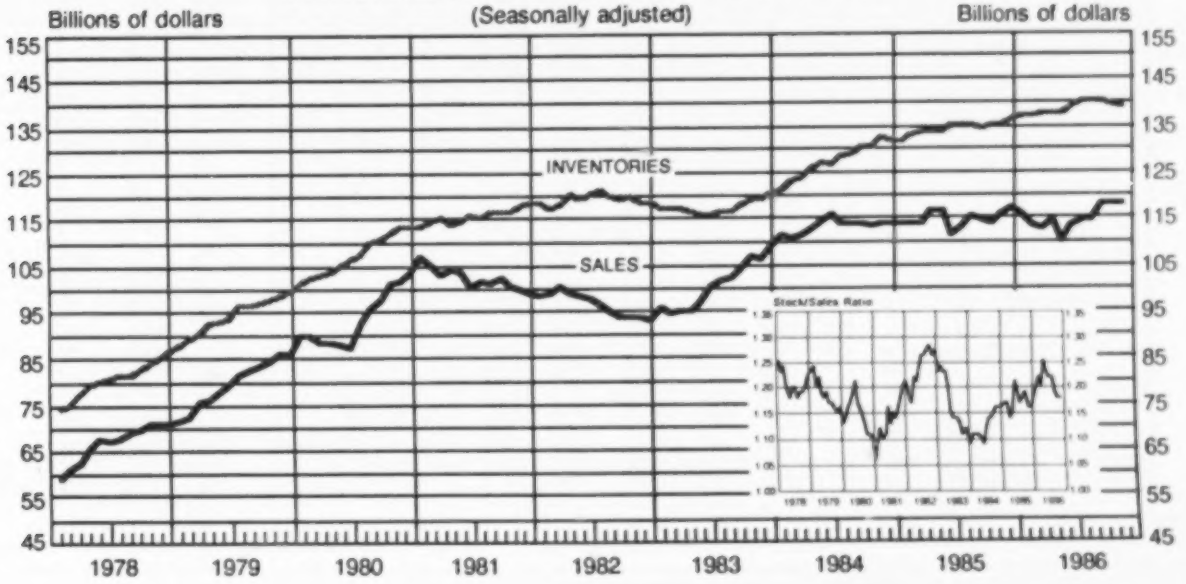
Sales. November 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were $118.0 billion, little changed from the revised October level and up 2.1 percent from a year ago. The October preliminary estimate was revised upward by less than $0.1 billion or about 0.01 percent. November sales of durable goods were little changed from October and were up 6.6 percent from a year ago. November sales of nondurable goods were little changed from October and from a year ago.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $138.8 billion at the end of November, little changed from the revised October level of $139.2 and were up 2.9 percent from a year ago. The October preliminary estimate was revised upward by $0.6 billion or about 0.46 percent. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers showed evidence of an increase from the October level and were up 5.1 percent from a year ago. Inventories of nondurable goods wholesalers decreased 1.8 percent from October and were little changed from November 1985.

Stock/Sales Ratio. The November stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.18, unchanged from the October ratio and above the year ago ratio of 1.17.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



The *Monthly Wholesale Trade* Report for December is scheduled to be released February 11, 1987, at 10:00 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to **Shirley Roberts**, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-3916 or 763-3917.

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Table 1A. Adjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986											1985	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.[P]	Nov.[r]	Dec.
	Sales, total	115,648	113,380	112,495	114,608	109,870	112,873	114,375	114,482	117,594	117,991	117,972	115,527	116,852
50	Durable goods	53,428	52,994	52,674	55,317	53,415	54,491	55,012	53,951	56,638	56,870	56,797	53,299	53,948
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,318	11,398	11,416	11,856	11,755	12,490	12,938	12,612	13,043	13,136	12,776	11,822	11,700
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,983	1,959	1,942	1,950	2,052	2,155	2,112	2,181	2,343	2,162	1,964	2,034	2,083
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,046	4,065	3,975	4,229	4,248	4,013	4,154	4,121	4,217	4,271	4,204	3,936	3,814
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,919	4,936	4,624	4,628	4,452	4,583	4,755	4,544	4,751	4,904	4,960	4,886	4,864
506	Electrical goods	7,716	7,773	7,764	7,632	7,531	7,718	7,579	7,561	7,881	7,922	7,645	7,718	7,799
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,488	3,421	3,553	3,741	3,700	3,572	3,461	3,686	3,725	3,646	3,681	3,518
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,541	13,442	13,662	14,154	13,313	13,472	13,770	13,662	13,701	13,734	14,658	13,451	13,830
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,723	4,612	4,898	5,474	4,928	5,051	4,742	4,786	5,585	5,279	5,380	4,586	4,721
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	60,386	59,821	59,291	56,455	58,382	59,363	60,531	60,956	61,121	61,175	62,228	62,904
511	Paper & paper products	3,197	3,127	3,164	3,184	3,115	3,187	3,162	3,256	3,205	3,244	3,218	3,021	3,080
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,276	2,238	2,289	2,265	2,285	2,261	2,368	2,430	2,447	2,541	2,626	2,210	2,211
514	Groceries & related products	19,104	18,551	18,951	18,741	18,710	19,206	19,466	20,323	20,164	19,988	19,929	18,657	18,808
515	Farm product raw materials	7,296	7,109	7,018	6,985	6,295	6,742	6,782	6,292	6,731	6,917	6,729	7,383	7,418
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,273	3,323	3,411	3,334	3,371	3,372	3,262	3,486	3,267	3,328	3,396	3,216	3,313
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,743	9,114	9,361	9,475	7,996	8,865	9,304	8,842	9,225	9,617	9,884	7,759	9,472
	Inventories, total	136,624	136,561	137,056	137,083	137,506	138,793	139,753	139,742	139,878	139,211	138,837	134,927	135,940
50	Durable goods	87,815	88,230	88,521	89,267	89,845	90,000	90,816	90,811	91,037	91,133	91,633	87,193	87,246
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,909	16,335	16,344	16,763	17,002	17,178	17,466	17,640	17,241	18,100	15,547	16,023
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,376	3,147	3,208	3,183	3,177	3,015	3,116	3,191	3,350	3,125	3,100	3,278	3,368
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,876	8,770	8,400	8,553	8,422	8,406	8,249	7,843	7,894	8,014	7,931	8,429	8,655
506	Electrical goods	12,511	12,610	12,834	13,050	12,531	12,731	13,058	12,996	13,347	13,290	13,667	12,654	12,586
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,752	5,859	5,915	5,876	5,981	6,038	5,991	6,090	6,002	6,008	5,928	5,860	5,775
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,012	30,406	30,273	30,521	30,872	30,523	30,905	31,010	30,388	30,517	30,422	30,285	30,005
51	Nondurable goods	48,809	48,331	48,535	47,816	47,661	48,793	48,937	48,931	48,841	48,078	47,204	47,734	48,694
511	Paper & paper products	3,154	3,143	3,188	3,170	3,095	3,127	3,141	3,150	3,147	3,206	3,160	3,031	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,611	10,650	10,800	10,912	10,682	10,905	10,891	10,937	10,941	11,000	11,202	9,913	10,265
515	Farm product raw materials	7,148	7,001	7,096	7,127	6,940	7,338	7,154	6,602	6,390	6,248	5,762	6,847	7,150
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,652	3,750	3,718	3,645	3,643	3,665	3,560	3,547	3,565	3,472	3,537	3,572	3,632
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,408	9,113	9,004	8,946	9,053	8,958	8,965	9,147	9,437	9,435	8,943	9,517	9,470
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.18	1.20	1.22	1.20	1.25	1.23	1.22	1.22	1.19	1.18	1.18	1.17	1.16
50	Durable goods	1.64	1.66	1.68	1.61	1.68	1.65	1.65	1.68	1.61	1.60	1.61	1.64	1.62
501	Motor vehicles & auto equip.	1.42	1.40	1.43	1.38	1.43	1.36	1.33	1.38	1.35	1.31	1.42	1.32	1.37
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.70	1.61	1.65	1.63	1.55	1.40	1.48	1.46	1.43	1.45	1.58	1.61	1.62
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.80	1.78	1.82	1.85	1.89	1.83	1.73	1.73	1.66	1.63	1.60	1.73	1.77
506	Electrical goods	1.62	1.62	1.65	1.71	1.66	1.65	1.72	1.72	1.69	1.68	1.79	1.64	1.61
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.66	1.68	1.73	1.65	1.60	1.63	1.68	1.76	1.63	1.61	1.63	1.59	1.64
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.26	2.22	2.16	2.32	2.27	2.24	2.27	2.22	2.22	2.08	2.25	2.17
51	Nondurable goods	.78	.80	.81	.81	.84	.84	.82	.81	.80	.79	.77	.77	.77
511	Paper & paper products	.99	1.01	1.01	1.00	.99	.98	.99	.97	.98	.99	.98	1.00	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	.56	.57	.57	.58	.57	.57	.56	.54	.54	.55	.56	.53	.55
515	Farm product raw materials	.98	.98	1.01	1.02	1.10	1.09	1.05	1.05	.95	.90	.86	.93	.98
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.13	1.09	1.09	1.08	1.09	1.09	1.02	1.09	1.04	1.04	1.11	1.10
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.08	1.00	.96	.94	1.13	1.01	.96	1.03	1.02	.98	.90	1.23	1.00

[r]Revised.

[P]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 1B. Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data not adjusted for seasonal variation or trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986											1985		Total 11 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.[P]	Nov.	Dec.	1986	1985
	Sales, total	112,335	102,577	113,986	115,789	114,902	114,570	115,381	111,946	118,531	124,768	113,389	113,874	116,941	1,258,154	1,256,985
50	Durable goods	50,115	47,324	53,148	56,202	55,285	56,071	56,057	53,897	57,941	61,875	54,355	52,393	52,653	602,270	574,096
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	11,092	10,042	11,484	12,366	12,695	13,040	13,559	11,981	12,169	14,320	12,214	11,562	11,419	134,982	123,153
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,781	1,759	1,909	2,065	2,109	2,215	2,108	2,150	2,444	2,499	1,938	2,046	1,975	22,977	21,346
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,455	3,248	3,637	4,280	4,524	4,402	4,586	4,504	4,538	4,933	4,015	3,857	3,276	46,122	41,984
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,904	4,625	4,888	4,767	4,564	4,753	4,698	4,503	4,951	5,110	4,414	4,417	4,694	52,167	55,819
506	Electrical goods	7,014	6,972	7,717	7,319	7,200	7,741	7,731	7,606	8,511	8,793	7,790	7,911	8,025	84,394	80,979
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,291	3,104	3,253	3,635	3,849	3,833	3,790	3,554	3,741	4,075	3,438	3,563	3,307	39,563	37,787
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,647	12,192	13,881	14,664	13,846	13,836	13,715	13,416	14,071	14,489	13,617	12,819	13,968	150,374	148,918
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,614	4,128	4,986	5,611	5,022	4,914	4,529	4,781	5,892	5,765	5,219	4,591	4,551	55,461	49,415
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	55,253	60,838	59,587	59,617	58,499	59,304	58,049	60,590	62,893	59,034	61,481	64,288	655,884	682,889
511	Paper & paper products	3,226	2,911	3,139	3,213	3,112	3,184	3,181	3,313	3,231	3,504	3,035	2,952	2,991	35,049	32,378
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,337	2,057	2,266	2,335	2,264	2,259	2,370	2,347	2,518	2,726	2,496	2,130	2,207	25,974	23,616
514	Groceries & related products	18,913	16,956	18,894	18,910	19,683	19,283	20,167	20,404	20,023	20,488	19,152	18,284	18,601	212,873	197,492
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,872	6,846	7,404	6,608	6,988	6,041	6,178	5,304	5,964	6,959	7,288	8,210	8,256	73,452	86,508
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,638	2,569	3,111	3,221	3,560	3,598	3,621	3,591	3,303	3,588	3,348	3,284	3,880	36,138	35,528
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,825	7,729	9,735	10,081	9,691	9,592	9,304	8,418	9,013	9,694	8,975	7,270	9,377	100,057	95,335
	Inventories, total	137,103	137,385	138,407	138,205	136,087	137,340	137,684	137,331	139,365	140,360	140,120	136,376	137,139	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	86,586	87,701	88,610	89,624	89,665	90,450	90,998	90,993	92,038	91,224	91,358	87,019	86,984	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,989	16,466	16,524	16,562	16,968	16,714	16,767	18,028	17,431	18,209	15,656	16,311	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,362	3,207	3,202	3,126	3,142	3,021	3,085	3,239	3,384	3,137	3,063	3,239	3,375	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,778	8,726	8,333	8,365	8,380	8,498	8,348	7,976	7,973	7,894	7,883	8,395	8,698	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	12,161	12,181	12,475	13,011	12,418	12,769	13,450	13,269	13,814	13,569	13,708	12,705	12,448	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,637	5,888	6,057	6,111	6,160	6,050	6,051	6,078	5,900	5,894	5,804	5,737	5,590	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,562	30,193	30,515	30,674	31,026	30,920	30,905	31,103	30,297	30,517	30,300	30,134	29,915	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	50,517	49,684	49,797	48,581	46,422	46,890	46,686	46,338	47,327	49,136	48,762	49,357	50,155	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,116	3,137	3,169	3,157	3,117	3,158	3,160	3,194	3,100	3,171	3,185	3,061	3,077	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,388	10,735	10,735	10,803	10,681	10,872	10,684	10,587	10,810	11,451	11,762	10,419	10,275	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	8,864	8,100	7,770	7,027	5,559	5,702	5,480	5,288	5,559	6,698	6,863	8,148	8,759	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,404	3,574	3,640	3,718	3,647	3,764	3,656	3,522	3,597	3,691	3,760	3,808	3,312	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,766	9,796	10,067	9,751	9,008	8,645	8,445	8,470	8,918	9,171	8,630	9,174	9,451	(X)	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.22	1.34	1.21	1.19	1.19	1.20	1.19	1.23	1.18	1.13	1.24	1.20	1.17	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.73	1.85	1.67	1.59	1.62	1.61	1.62	1.69	1.59	1.47	1.68	1.66	1.65	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	1.45	1.59	1.43	1.34	1.30	1.30	1.23	1.40	1.48	1.22	1.49	1.35	1.43	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.89	1.82	1.68	1.51	1.49	1.36	1.46	1.51	1.38	1.26	1.58	1.58	1.71	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.79	1.89	1.70	1.75	1.84	1.79	1.78	1.77	1.61	1.54	1.79	1.90	1.85	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	1.73	1.75	1.62	1.78	1.72	1.65	1.74	1.74	1.62	1.54	1.76	1.61	1.55	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.90	1.86	1.68	1.60	1.58	1.60	1.71	1.58	1.45	1.69	1.61	1.69	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.34	2.48	2.20	2.09	2.24	2.23	2.25	2.32	2.15	2.11	2.23	2.35	2.14	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	.81	.90	.82	.82	.78	.80	.79	.80	.78	.78	.83	.80	.78	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	.97	1.08	1.01	.98	1.00	.99	.99	.96	.96	.90	1.06	1.04	1.03	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	.55	.63	.57	.57	.54	.56	.53	.52	.54	.56	.61	.57	.55	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.13	1.18	1.05	1.06	.80	.94	.89	1.00	.93	.96	.94	.99	1.06	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.29	1.40	1.17	1.15	1.02	1.05	1.01	.98	1.09	1.03	1.12	1.16	.86	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.25	1.27	1.03	.97	.93	.90	.91	1.01	.99	.95	.96	1.26	1.01	(X)	(X)

[P]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*
x Cumulative data are not applicable for inventories or stock/sales ratios, cumulative seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. **Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers**

SIC code	Kind of business	Unadjusted					Adjusted[1]			
		Sales			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		Nov.1986 from Oct.1986	Nov.1986 from Nov.1985	11 months 1986 from 11 months 1985	Nov.1986 from Oct.1986	Nov.1986 from Nov.1985	Nov.1986 from Oct.1986	Nov.1986 from Nov.1985	Nov.1986 from Oct.1986	Nov.1986 from Nov.1985
	Total	-9.1	-.4	+.1	-.2	+2.7	.0	+2.1	-.3	+2.9
50	Durable goods	-12.2	+3.7	+4.9	+.1	+5.0	-.1	+6.6	+.5	+5.1
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	-14.7	+5.6	+9.6	+4.5	+16.3	-2.8	+8.1	+5.0	+16.4
502	Furniture & home furnishings	-22.4	-5.3	+7.6	-2.4	-5.4	-9.2	-3.4	-.8	-5.4
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	-18.6	+4.1	+9.9	(S)	(S)	-1.6	+6.8	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	-13.6	-.1	-6.5	-.1	-6.1	+1.1	+1.5	-1.0	-5.9
506	Electrical goods	-11.4	-1.5	+4.2	+1.0	+7.9	-3.5	-.9	+2.8	+8.0
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	-15.6	-3.5	+4.7	-1.5	+1.2	-2.1	-1.0	-1.3	+1.2
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	-6.0	+6.2	+1.0	-.7	+.6	+6.7	+9.0	-.3	+.5
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	-9.5	+13.7	+12.2	(S)	(S)	+1.9	+17.3	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	-6.1	-4.0	-4.0	-.8	-1.2	+.1	-1.7	-1.8	-1.1
511	Paper & paper products	-13.4	+2.8	+8.2	+.4	+4.1	-.8	+6.5	-1.4	+4.3
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	-8.5	+17.1	+10.0	(S)	(S)	+3.3	+18.8	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	-6.5	+4.7	+7.8	+2.7	+12.9	-.3	+6.8	+1.8	+13.0
515	Farm-product raw materials	+4.7	-11.2	-15.1	+2.5	-15.8	-2.7	-8.9	-7.8	-15.8
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	-6.7	+1.9	+1.7	+1.9	-1.3	+2.0	+5.6	+1.9	-1.0
519	Misc. nondurable goods	-7.4	+23.5	+5.0	-5.9	-5.9	+2.8	+27.4	-5.2	-6.0

S Data do not meet publication standards.

[1]Adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972,* and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +1.0 percent to -0.4 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +0.5 percent to -0.8 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarly, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Classification Differences Between Monthly Survey and 1977 and 1982 Censuses of Wholesale Trade

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

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[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

[3]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program*, U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series*, Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.9	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

Table 4. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of business	1985		1986										
		Nov.[r]	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.[r]	Nov.[r]	Dec.
	Sales,[1] total	.983	1.002	.976	.905	1.012	1.008	1.039	1.012	1.007	.972	1.008	1.055	.959	1.026
50	Durable goods	.983	.976	.938	.893	1.009	1.016	1.035	1.029	1.019	.999	1.023	1.088	.957	1.002
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	.978	.976	.980	.881	1.006	1.043	1.080	1.044	1.048	.950	.933	1.090	.956	1.006
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.006	.948	.898	.898	.983	1.059	1.028	1.028	.998	.986	1.043	1.156	.987	.981
503	Lumber & other construction mat	.980	.859	.854	.799	.915	1.012	1.065	1.097	1.104	1.093	1.076	1.155	.955	.875
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	.904	.961	.997	.937	1.057	1.030	1.023	1.037	.988	.991	1.042	1.042	.890	.986
506	Electrical goods	1.025	1.029	.909	.897	.994	.959	.956	1.003	1.020	1.006	1.080	1.110	1.019	1.057
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	.968	.940	.948	.890	.951	1.023	1.029	1.036	1.061	1.027	1.015	1.094	.943	.962
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	.953	1.010	.934	.907	1.016	1.036	1.040	1.027	.996	.982	1.027	1.055	.929	1.029
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	1.001	.964	.977	.895	1.018	1.025	1.019	.971	.955	.999	1.055	1.092	.970	.978
51	Nondurable goods	.988	1.022	1.000	.915	1.017	1.005	1.056	1.002	.999	.959	.994	1.029	.965	1.046
511	Paper & paper products	.977	.971	1.009	.931	.992	1.009	.999	.999	1.006	1.017	1.008	1.080	.943	.995
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	.964	.998	1.027	.919	.990	1.031	.991	.999	1.001	.966	1.029	1.073	.950	1.019
514	Groceries & related products	.980	.989	.990	.914	.997	1.009	1.052	1.004	1.036	1.004	.993	1.025	.961	1.021
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.112	1.113	1.079	.963	1.055	.946	1.110	.896	.911	.843	.886	1.006	1.083	1.152
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.021	1.165	.806	.770	.912	.966	1.056	1.067	1.110	1.030	1.011	1.078	.986	1.203
519	Misc. nondurable goods	.937	.990	.895	.848	1.040	1.064	1.212	1.082	1.000	.952	.977	1.008	.908	.998
	Inventories,[1] total	1.012	1.008	1.003	1.006	1.009	1.008	.991	.989	.985	.982	.996	1.008	1.012	1.008
50	Durable goods	.998	.997	.986	.994	1.001	1.004	.998	1.005	1.002	1.002	1.011	1.001	.997	.997
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.007	1.018	1.000	1.005	1.008	1.011	.988	.998	.973	.960	1.022	1.011	1.006	1.019
502	Furniture & home furnishings	.988	1.002	.996	1.019	.998	.982	.989	1.002	.990	1.015	1.010	1.004	.988	1.013
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	.996	1.005	.989	.995	.992	.978	.995	1.011	1.012	1.017	1.010	.985	.994	1.007
506	Electrical goods	1.004	.989	.972	.966	.972	.997	.991	1.003	1.030	1.021	1.035	1.021	1.003	.988
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip	.979	.968	.980	1.005	1.024	1.040	1.030	1.002	1.010	.998	.983	.981	.979	.963
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	.995	.997	.985	.993	1.008	1.005	1.005	1.013	1.000	1.003	.997	1.000	.996	.997
51	Nondurable goods	1.034	1.030	1.035	1.028	1.026	1.016	.974	.961	.954	.947	.969	1.022	1.033	1.032
511	Paper & paper products	1.010	.992	.988	.998	.994	.996	1.007	1.010	1.006	1.014	.985	.989	1.008	.990
514	Groceries & related products	1.051	1.001	.979	1.008	.994	.990	.998	.997	.981	.968	.988	1.041	1.050	.998
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.190	1.225	1.240	1.157	1.095	.986	.801	.777	.766	.801	.870	1.072	1.191	1.227
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.066	.912	.932	.953	.979	1.020	1.001	1.027	1.027	.993	1.009	1.063	1.063	.911
519	Misc. nondurable goods	.964	.998	1.038	1.075	1.118	1.090	.995	.964	.942	.926	.945	.972	.965	1.006

[r]Revised.

[1]Adjusted sales and inventory data shown in table 1A are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

NOTE: Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some groups not shown separately. The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through the current month preliminary estimate.

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Monthly Wholesale Trade

CURRENT BUSINESS REPORTS

December 1986

Issued February 1987
BW-86-12

Sales and Inventories

Intention to Revise Wholesale Estimates: The unadjusted and adjusted merchant wholesale sales, inventories, and stock/sales ratio estimates will be revised utilizing the results from the 1985 Annual Trade Survey. Revised estimates for the period December 1980 through December 1986 are scheduled for release during the week of April 6. **NOTICE:** Beginning with the January 1987 publication, released in early April, estimates of total inventories will be on a non-LIFO basis. Comparable historic data will be available from December 1980.

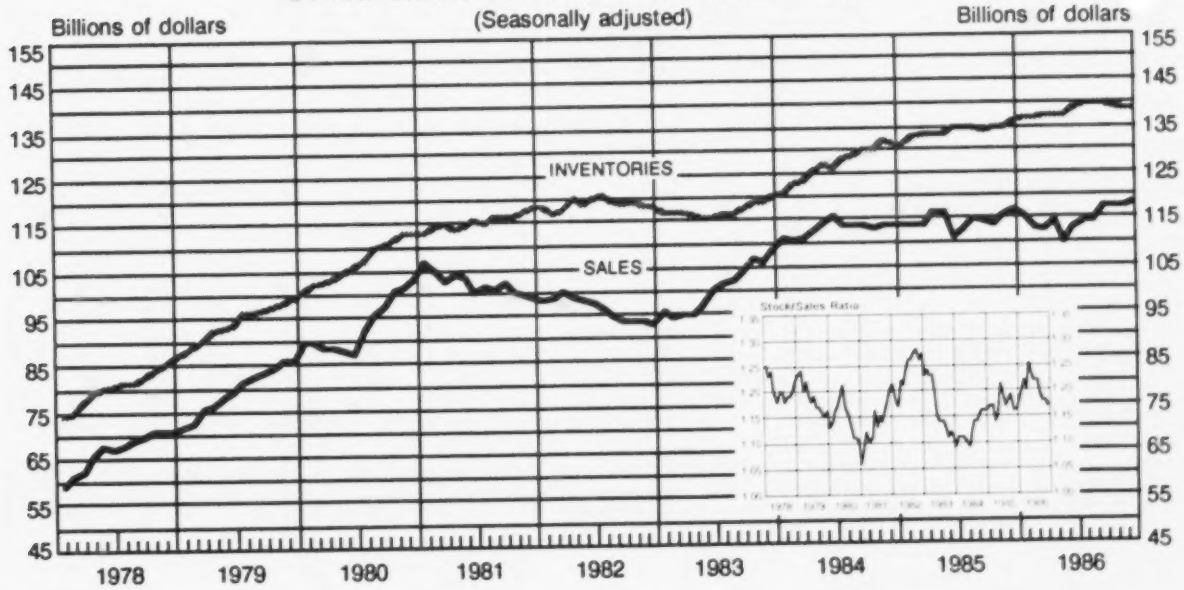
Sales. December 1986 sales of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation and trading-day differences but not for price changes, were $118.1 billion, little changed from the revised November level and up 1.8 percent from a year ago. The November preliminary estimate was revised downward by $0.4 billion or about 0.3 percent. December sales of durable goods showed evidence of an increase from November and were up 6.7 percent from a year ago. December sales of nondurable goods were little changed from November and showed evidence of a decrease from December 1985.

Inventories. Total inventories of merchant wholesalers, after adjustment for seasonal variation but not for price changes, were $138.6 billion at the end of December, lilttle changed from the revised November level and showed evidence of an increase from a year ago. The November preliminary estimate was revised upward by $0.01 billion or about 0.01 percent. Inventories of durable goods wholesalers decreased 1.2 percent from the November level but were up 3.3 percent from a year ago. Inventories of nondurable goods wholesalers increased 1.8 percent from November and were little changed from December 1985.

Stock/Sales Ratio. The December stock/sales ratio for merchant wholesalers, based on seasonally adjusted data was 1.17, down from the November ratio of 1.18 and the same as the year ago ratio.

Data in this report are based on a sample and, therefore, are subject to sampling and nonsampling errors. A discussion of the reliability of the data is on page 4.

Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1978 – 1986



The *Monthly Wholesale Trade* Report for January is scheduled to be released March 12, 1987, at 10:00 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to **Shirley Roberts**, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233. Telephone (301) 763-3916 or 763-3917.

U.S. Department of Commerce
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Table 1A. Adjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985

(Data adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986												1985
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.[P]	Dec.[r]
	Sales, total	115,648	113,380	112,495	114,608	109,870	112,873	114,375	114,482	117,594	117,991	117,605	118,118	116,028
50	Durable goods	53,428	52,994	52,674	55,317	53,415	54,491	55,012	53,951	56,638	56,870	56,527	57,278	53,673
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	11,318	11,398	11,416	11,856	11,755	12,490	12,938	12,612	13,043	13,138	12,735	13,137	11,605
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,983	1,959	1,942	1,950	2,052	2,155	2,112	2,181	2,343	2,162	2,057	2,057	2,081
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	4,046	4,065	3,975	4,229	4,248	4,013	4,154	4,121	4,217	4,271	4,290	4,615	3,823
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,919	4,936	4,624	4,628	4,452	4,583	4,755	4,544	4,751	4,904	4,895	4,781	4,900
506	Electrical goods	7,716	7,773	7,764	7,632	7,531	7,718	7,579	7,561	7,881	7,922	7,612	7,675	7,724
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,472	3,488	3,421	3,553	3,741	3,700	3,572	3,461	3,686	3,725	3,703	3,859	3,496
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	13,541	13,442	13,662	14,154	13,313	13,472	13,770	13,662	13,701	13,734	14,311	15,021	13,708
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,723	4,612	4,898	5,474	4,928	5,061	4,742	4,786	5,585	5,279	5,186	4,788	4,894
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	60,386	59,821	59,291	56,455	58,382	59,363	60,531	60,956	61,121	61,078	60,840	62,355
511	Paper & paper products	3,197	3,127	3,164	3,184	3,115	3,187	3,162	3,258	3,205	3,244	3,284	3,405	3,058
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,276	2,238	2,289	2,265	2,285	2,261	2,368	2,430	2,447	2,541	2,612	2,612	2,207
514	Groceries & related products	19,104	18,551	18,951	18,741	18,710	19,206	19,466	20,323	20,164	19,988	20,020	20,103	18,638
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,296	7,109	7,018	6,985	6,295	6,742	6,782	6,292	6,731	6,917	6,526	6,522	7,223
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,273	3,323	3,411	3,334	3,371	3,372	3,262	3,486	3,267	3,328	3,423	3,416	3,316
519	Misc. nondurable goods	8,743	9,114	9,361	9,475	7,996	8,865	9,304	8,842	9,225	9,617	10,017	9,758	9,707
	Inventories, total	136,624	136,561	137,056	137,083	137,506	138,793	139,753	139,742	139,878	139,211	138,849	138,635	135,833
50	Durable goods	87,815	88,230	88,521	89,267	89,845	90,000	90,816	90,811	91,037	91,133	91,392	90,334	87,421
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,909	16,335	16,344	16,763	17,002	17,178	17,466	17,640	17,241	17,982	17,782	16,007
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,376	3,147	3,208	3,183	3,177	3,015	3,116	3,191	3,350	3,125	3,138	3,320	3,296
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,876	8,770	8,400	8,553	8,422	8,406	8,249	7,843	7,894	8,014	7,815	8,015	8,612
506	Electrical goods	12,511	12,610	12,834	13,050	12,531	12,731	13,058	12,996	13,347	13,290	13,570	13,304	12,638
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,752	5,859	5,915	5,876	5,981	6,038	5,991	6,090	6,002	6,008	6,003	6,155	5,787
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	30,012	30,406	30,273	30,521	30,872	30,523	30,905	31,010	30,388	30,517	30,644	28,994	30,005
51	Nondurable goods	48,809	48,331	48,535	47,816	47,661	48,793	48,937	48,931	48,841	48,078	47,457	48,301	48,412
511	Paper & paper products	3,154	3,143	3,188	3,170	3,095	3,127	3,141	3,150	3,147	3,206	3,183	3,378	3,102
514	Groceries & related products	10,611	10,650	10,800	10,912	10,682	10,905	10,891	10,937	10,941	11,000	11,142	11,397	10,265
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,148	7,001	7,096	7,127	6,940	7,338	7,154	6,602	6,390	6,248	5,697	5,670	7,144
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,652	3,750	3,718	3,645	3,643	3,665	3,560	3,547	3,565	3,472	3,610	3,592	3,628
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,408	9,113	9,004	8,946	9,053	8,968	8,965	9,147	9,437	9,435	9,029	9,052	9,367
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.18	1.20	1.22	1.20	1.25	1.23	1.22	1.22	1.19	1.18	1.18	1.17	1.17
50	Durable goods	1.64	1.66	1.68	1.61	1.68	1.65	1.65	1.68	1.61	1.60	1.62	1.58	1.63
501	Motor vehicles & auto equip.	1.42	1.40	1.43	1.38	1.43	1.36	1.33	1.38	1.35	1.31	1.41	1.35	1.38
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.70	1.61	1.65	1.63	1.55	1.40	1.48	1.46	1.43	1.45	1.53	1.61	1.58
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.80	1.78	1.82	1.85	1.89	1.83	1.73	1.73	1.66	1.63	1.60	1.68	1.76
506	Electrical goods	1.62	1.62	1.65	1.71	1.66	1.65	1.72	1.72	1.69	1.68	1.78	1.73	1.64
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.66	1.68	1.73	1.65	1.60	1.63	1.68	1.76	1.63	1.61	1.62	1.59	1.66
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.22	2.26	2.22	2.16	2.32	2.27	2.24	2.27	2.22	2.22	2.14	1.93	2.19
51	Nondurable goods	.78	.80	.81	.81	.84	.84	.82	.81	.80	.79	.78	.79	.78
511	Paper & paper products	.99	1.01	1.01	1.00	.99	.98	.99	.97	.98	.99	.97	.99	1.01
514	Groceries & related products	.56	.57	.57	.58	.57	.57	.56	.54	.54	.55	.56	.57	.55
515	Farm-product raw materials	.98	.98	1.01	1.02	1.10	1.09	1.05	1.05	.95	.90	.87	.87	.99
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.12	1.13	1.09	1.09	1.08	1.09	1.09	1.02	1.09	1.04	1.05	1.05	1.09
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.08	1.00	.96	.94	1.13	1.01	.96	1.03	1.02	.98	.90	.93	.96

[r]Revised.

[P]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 1B. **Unadjusted Estimated Monthly Sales, Inventories, and Stock/Sales Ratios of Merchant Wholesalers: 1986 and 1985**

(Data not adjusted for seasonal variation or trading-day differences. Sales and inventories in millions of dollars)

SIC code	Kind of business	1986												1985	Total 12 mos.	
		Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.[p]	Dec.	1986	1985
	Sales, total	112,335	102,577	113,986	115,789	114,902	114,570	115,361	111,946	118,531	124,768	112,984	121,626	116,941	1,379,375	1,373,926
50	Durable goods	50,115	47,324	53,148	56,202	55,285	56,071	56,057	53,897	57,941	61,875	53,983	57,622	52,653	659,520	626,749
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	11,092	10,042	11,484	12,366	12,695	13,040	13,559	11,981	12,169	14,320	12,136	13,334	11,419	148,218	134,572
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1,781	1,759	1,909	2,065	2,109	2,215	2,108	2,150	2,444	2,499	2,020	1,997	1,975	25,056	23,321
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	3,455	3,248	3,637	4,280	4,524	4,402	4,586	4,504	4,538	4,933	4,080	4,070	3,276	50,257	45,260
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	4,904	4,625	4,888	4,767	4,554	4,753	4,698	4,503	4,951	5,110	4,366	4,666	4,694	56,785	60,513
506	Electrical goods	7,014	6,972	7,717	7,319	7,200	7,741	7,731	7,606	8,511	8,793	7,749	8,135	8,025	92,488	89,004
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	3,291	3,104	3,253	3,635	3,849	3,833	3,790	3,554	3,741	4,075	3,518	3,739	3,307	43,382	41,094
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	12,647	12,192	13,881	14,664	13,846	13,836	13,715	13,416	14,071	14,489	13,338	15,592	13,968	165,687	162,886
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	4,614	4,128	4,986	5,611	5,022	4,914	4,529	4,781	5,892	5,765	5,067	4,525	4,551	59,834	53,966
51	Nondurable goods	62,220	55,253	60,838	59,587	59,617	58,499	59,304	58,049	60,590	62,893	59,001	64,004	64,288	719,855	747,177
511	Paper & paper products	3,226	2,911	3,139	3,213	3,112	3,184	3,181	3,313	3,231	3,504	3,097	3,422	2,991	38,533	35,369
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	2,337	2,057	2,266	2,335	2,264	2,259	2,370	2,347	2,518	2,726	2,484	2,662	2,207	28,625	25,823
514	Groceries & related products	18,913	16,956	18,894	18,910	19,683	19,283	20,167	20,404	20,023	20,488	19,259	20,585	18,601	233,565	216,093
515	Farm-product raw materials	7,872	6,846	7,404	6,608	6,988	6,041	6,178	5,304	5,964	6,959	7,009	7,683	8,256	80,856	94,764
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	2,638	2,559	3,111	3,221	3,560	3,598	3,621	3,591	3,303	3,588	3,368	4,127	3,860	40,285	39,388
519	Misc. nondurable goods	7,825	7,729	9,735	10,081	9,691	9,592	9,304	8,418	9,013	9,694	9,176	9,612	9,377	109,870	104,712
	Inventories, total	137,103	137,385	138,407	138,205	136,087	137,340	137,684	137,331	139,365	140,360	140,182	139,832	137,139	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	86,586	87,701	88,610	89,624	89,665	90,450	90,998	90,993	92,038	91,224	91,301	89,792	86,984	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	16,045	15,989	16,466	16,524	16,562	16,968	16,714	16,767	18,028	17,431	18,126	18,120	16,311	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	3,362	3,207	3,202	3,126	3,142	3,021	3,085	3,239	3,384	3,137	3,116	3,410	3,375	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	8,778	8,726	8,333	8,365	8,380	8,498	8,348	7,976	7,973	7,894	7,729	8,095	8,698	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	12,161	12,181	12,475	13,011	12,418	12,769	13,450	13,269	13,814	13,569	13,638	13,104	12,448	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	5,637	5,888	6,057	6,111	6,160	6,050	6,051	6,078	5,900	5,894	5,865	5,940	5,590	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	29,562	30,193	30,515	30,674	31,026	30,920	30,905	31,103	30,297	30,517	30,460	28,907	29,915	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	50,517	49,684	49,797	48,581	46,422	46,890	46,686	46,338	47,327	49,136	48,881	50,040	50,155	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	3,116	3,137	3,169	3,157	3,117	3,158	3,160	3,194	3,100	3,171	3,208	3,351	3,077	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	10,388	10,735	10,735	10,803	10,661	10,872	10,684	10,587	10,810	11,451	11,643	11,386	10,275	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	8,864	8,100	7,770	7,027	5,559	5,702	5,480	5,288	5,559	6,698	6,768	6,929	8,759	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	3,404	3,574	3,640	3,718	3,647	3,764	3,656	3,522	3,597	3,691	3,841	3,276	3,312	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	9,766	9,796	10,067	9,751	9,008	8,645	8,445	8,470	8,918	9,171	8,677	9,161	9,451	(X)	(X)
	Stock/sales ratios, total	1.22	1.34	1.21	1.19	1.18	1.20	1.19	1.23	1.18	1.12	1.24	1.15	1.17	(X)	(X)
50	Durable goods	1.73	1.85	1.67	1.59	1.62	1.61	1.62	1.69	1.59	1.47	1.69	1.56	1.65	(X)	(X)
501	Motor vehicles & auto equipment	1.45	1.59	1.43	1.34	1.30	1.30	1.23	1.40	1.48	1.22	1.49	1.36	1.43	(X)	(X)
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.89	1.82	1.68	1.51	1.49	1.36	1.46	1.51	1.38	1.26	1.54	1.71	1.71	(X)	(X)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.79	1.89	1.70	1.75	1.84	1.79	1.78	1.77	1.61	1.54	1.77	1.73	1.85	(X)	(X)
506	Electrical goods	1.73	1.75	1.62	1.78	1.72	1.65	1.74	1.74	1.62	1.54	1.76	1.61	1.55	(X)	(X)
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	1.71	1.90	1.86	1.68	1.60	1.58	1.60	1.71	1.58	1.45	1.67	1.59	1.69	(X)	(X)
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	2.34	2.48	2.20	2.09	2.24	2.23	2.25	2.32	2.15	2.11	2.28	1.85	2.14	(X)	(X)
51	Nondurable goods	.81	.90	.82	.82	.78	.80	.79	.80	.78	.78	.83	.78	.78	(X)	(X)
511	Paper & paper products	.97	1.08	1.01	.98	1.00	.99	.99	.96	.96	.90	1.04	.98	1.03	(X)	(X)
514	Groceries & related products	.55	.63	.57	.57	.54	.56	.53	.52	.54	.56	.60	.55	.55	(X)	(X)
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.13	1.18	1.05	1.06	.80	.94	.89	1.00	.93	.96	.97	.90	1.06	(X)	(X)
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.29	1.40	1.17	1.15	1.02	1.05	1.01	.98	1.09	1.03	1.14	.79	.86	(X)	(X)
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.25	1.27	1.03	.97	.93	.90	.91	1.01	.99	.95	.95	.95	1.01	(X)	(X)

[p]Preliminary estimate. See sample design and estimation procedures in *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.*
x Cumulative data are not applicable for inventories or stock/sales ratios, cumulative seasonally adjusted sales estimates are not tabulated.

NOTE: Preliminary inventories estimates have been modified prior to publication based on past relationships between preliminary and final estimates. Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some kinds of business not shown separately.

Table 2. **Percent Change in Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers**

SIC code	Kind of business	Unadjusted					Adjusted[1]			
		Sales			Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)		Sales		Inventories, end-of-month (at cost)	
		Dec.1986 from Nov.1986	Dec.1986 from Dec.1985	12 months 1986 from 12 months 1985	Dec.1986 from Nov.1986	Dec.1986 from Dec.1985	Dec.1986 from Nov.1986	Dec.1986 from Dec.1985	Dec.1986 from Nov.1986	Dec.1986 from Dec.1985
	Total	+7.6	+4.0	+.4	-.2	+2.0	+.4	+1.8	-.2	+2.1
50	Durable goods	+6.7	+9.4	+5.2	-1.7	+3.2	+1.3	+6.7	-1.2	+3.3
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip.	+9.9	+16.8	+10.1	.0	+11.1	+3.2	+13.2	-1.1	+11.1
502	Furniture & home furnishings	-1.1	+1.1	+7.4	+9.4	+1.0	.0	-1.2	+5.8	+.7
503	Lumber & other construction mat.	-.2	+24.2	+11.0	(S)	(S)	+7.6	+20.7	(S)	(S)
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	+6.9	-.6	-6.2	+4.7	-6.9	-2.3	-2.4	+2.6	-6.9
506	Electrical goods	+5.0	+1.4	+3.9	-3.9	+5.3	+.8	-.6	-2.0	+5.3
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	+6.3	+13.1	+5.6	+1.3	+6.3	+4.2	+10.4	+2.5	+6.4
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	+16.9	+11.6	+1.7	-5.1	-3.4	+5.0	+9.6	-5.4	-3.4
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	-10.7	-.6	+10.9	(S)	(S)	-7.7	-2.2	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods	+8.5	-.4	-3.7	+2.4	-.2	-.4	-2.4	+1.8	-.2
511	Paper & paper products	+10.5	+14.4	+8.9	+4.5	+8.9	+3.7	+11.3	+6.1	+8.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	+7.2	+20.6	+10.9	(S)	(S)	.0	+18.4	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries & related products	+6.9	+10.7	+8.1	-2.2	+10.8	+.4	+7.9	+2.3	+11.0
515	Farm-product raw materials	+9.6	-6.9	-14.7	+2.4	-20.9	-.1	-9.7	-.5	-20.6
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	+22.5	+6.9	+2.3	-14.7	-1.1	-.2	+3.0	-.5	-1.0
519	Misc. nondurable goods	+4.8	+2.5	+4.9	+5.6	-3.1	-2.6	+.5	+.3	-3.4

S Data do not meet publication standards.

[1]Adjusted for seasonal variation and, in the case of sales, also for trading day differences.

EXPLANATORY MATERIAL

Scope of Survey

Wholesale trade, as defined in Major Groups 50 and 51 of the 1972 edition of the *Standard Industrial Classification Manual*[1] and the 1977 Supplement and as covered in the 1977 Economic Censuses, includes establishments or places of business primarily engaged in selling merchandise to retailers; to industrial, commercial, institutional, farm, or professional business users; to other wholesalers; or acting as agents or brokers in buying merchandise for or selling merchandise to such persons or companies.

The principal types of establishments included are: (1) merchant wholesalers who take title to the goods they sell, such as wholesale merchants or jobbers, industrial distributors, voluntary group wholesalers, exporters, importers, cash-and-carry wholesalers, drop shippers, major distributors, retailer cooperative warehouses, terminal elevators, and cooperative buying associations; (2) sales branches and sales offices (but not retail stores) maintained by domestic manufacturing or mining enterprises apart from their plants or mines for the purpose of marketing their products; and (3) agents, merchandise or commodity brokers, and commission merchants.

This survey is limited to merchant wholesalers (described under category 1 above), who constitute the major portion of the broad field of wholesale trade, and excludes the other types of wholesale trade. All kinds of business in which merchant wholesalers operate are represented in this survey.

Also included in this survey are the sales and inventories of central administrative offices and auxiliaries of merchant wholesale establishments and manufacturers' sales branches of ferrous metal service centers SIC (505).

[1]Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, *Standard Industrial Classification Manual, 1972,* and the 1977 Supplement.

Reliability of Data

There are two types of errors possible in an estimate based on a sample survey—sampling and nonsampling. Sampling errors occur because observations are made only on a sample, not on the entire population. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources in the collection and processing of data. The accuracy of a survey result is determined by the joint effects of sampling and nonsampling errors.

The estimates of the coefficients of variation in percent for sales and inventories at the level of detail provided in this publication are shown in table 3. Note that the particular sample used in this survey is one of a large number of all possible samples of the same size that could have been selected using the same design. In about two out of three (67 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from a complete enumeration by less than the corresponding percent for that estimate shown in the sampling variability table. In about 19 out of 20 (95 percent) of these samples, the estimate would differ from the results of a complete enumeration by less than twice the percentages shown.

The coefficient of variation also measures certain nonsampling errors but does not measure any systematic biases in the data. Bias is the difference, averaged over all possible samples of the same size and design, between the estimate and the true value being estimated.

A major source of bias in the published estimates is due to imputing data for nonrespondents, for late reporters, and for data which fail edit. For all kinds of business combined, imputed data amount to about 17 percent of the sales estimates and 23 percent for inventories.

Differences between preliminary and final estimates[2] of seasonally adjusted sales ranged from approximately +1.0 percent to -0.4 percent for the past 12 months. During the same period, the average of the absolute differences was 0.4 percent. The corresponding range for inventories was approximately +0.5 percent to -0.8 percent for the past 12 months. The average of the absolute differences was 0.3 percent.

Sample Design and Estimation Procedures

See *Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985* for a full description of the sample design and estimation procedures.

Benchmarking

Wholesale sales and inventory estimates in this report reflect the results of a benchmarking[3] operation which made use of 1983 and 1984 estimates tabulated from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey. The sales estimates for the period January 1983 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the sum of the 12 months for 1983 and 1984 were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and the differences between the month-to-month trends from the original and derived series were minimized. The estimates for the original series were derived by using composite estimating procedures. Similarly, monthly inventory estimates for the period January 1984 through December 1985 were derived in a manner so that the end-of-year 1984 estimates were equal to the results from the 1984 Annual Trade Survey, and differences between the original and derived series were minimized.

Through the use of carry-forward factors, the effect of the revision process was applied to composite sales and inventory estimates subsequent to December 1984. These factors were derived at various kind-of-business levels and are held constant until the next benchmarking operation. Aggregate level estimates were derived by summing appropriate three-digit kind-of-business estimates, thereby assuring additivity.

Classification Differences Between Monthly Survey and 1977 and 1982 Censuses of Wholesale Trade

For SIC 505, the monthly survey included merchant wholesalers as well as sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories. Therefore, the 1977 and 1982 census sales estimates included the receipts of merchant wholesalers and sales branches of ferrous metals service centers with inventories.

Establishments classified in the Farm-Product Raw Materials group (SIC 515) included as sales, products purchased and transferred to other company establishments. In the monthly survey, inter-company transfers are not included in sales. Because of the differences, the 1977 and 1982 sales for the SIC were obtained from the 1977 and 1982 Annual Trade Surveys (ATS).

Inventories were not benchmarked to the census levels since the census of wholesale trade does not include inventories of auxiliary and central administrative offices of merchant wholesale establishments which are included in the monthly survey. The inventory estimates for the years 1977 and 1982 were computed by multiplying the stock/sales ratios obtained from the annual surveys by the census sales for these years.

Unpublished Data

Sales and inventory estimates for unpublished three-digit and four-digit wholesale trade categories are not included in this publication because their sampling variability is so high, relative to the changes from month-to-month or between other periods, as to make them potentially misleading. The Census Bureau on written request will release these data for individual use, though not for publication.

Definition of Terms

Sales. Sales include the following: merchandise sold for cash or credit at wholesale and retail by establishments primarily engaged in merchant wholesale trade; receipts from customers for rental or leasing of equipment, instruments, tools, etc.; receipts for delivery, installation, alteration, maintenance, repair, storage, and other services; and gasoline, liquor, tobacco, and other excise taxes which are paid by the manufacturer and passed along to the wholesaler. Sales are net after deductions for refunds and allowances for merchandise returned by customers. Sales which are made on an agency basis for others are included as gross sales. Direct shipments on orders from wholesalers are also included in sales. Total sales do not include nonoperating income from sources such as investments, rental or sale of real estate, etc.

Sales exclude sales and excise taxes collected directly from customers and paid directly to a local, State, or Federal tax agency. Also excluded are receipts from customers for carrying or other credit charges.

Inventories. Inventories represent stocks at cost of merchandise owned by merchant wholesalers at the end of the month regardless of location except for goods held outside the United States. Goods held on consignment and items not held for sale such as fixtures, equipment, and supplies are not included. Goods held in foreign trade zones in the United States are also included. Methods of valuation may vary according to the accounting practices of the firm.

Stock/ Sales Ratios. The stock/sales ratios are derived by dividing the dollar value of inventories by the dollar value of sales. No adjustment is made in these ratios for the markup in sales which may vary from trade to trade.

Kind-of-Business Classifications

The durable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 50. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 501 through 509.

The nondurable goods group includes establishments primarily engaged in the distribution of goods classified in SIC major group 51. This group includes establishments classified in SIC groups 511 through 519.

For a further description of the kinds of business included in the major groups see the *1972 Standard Industrial Classification Manual* and the 1977 Supplement.

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[2]See Sample Design and Estimation Procedures in Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade, Sales and Inventories: January 1976-December 1985.

[3]For a more detailed description, see the section dealing with revisions to published data in the Current Business Report Revised Monthly Wholesale Trade: January 1976 through December 1985.

Adjustment for Seasonal and Trading-Day Variation

Seasonal factors for adjusting data in this publication have been developed by the method described in the *X-11 Variant of the Census Method II Seasonal Adjustment Program,* U.S. Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 15, revised 1967. Trading-day factors for adjusting sales estimates were also derived from the X-11 program.

Seasonal adjustment of estimates is an approximation based on current and past experiences. Therefore, the adjustment could become less precise if current competitive pressures, changes in economic conditions, and other elements introduce significant changes in seasonal and trading-day patterns.

A description of the trading-day adjustment procedure may be found in *Estimating Trading-Day Variation in Monthly Economic Time Series,* Bureau of the Census Technical Paper No. 12, 1965. Additional details concerning the seasonal adjustment procedure may be obtained from the Chief, Business Division, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. 20233.

Concurrent Seasonal Adjustment

Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates (including the latest preliminary estimates) as input to the X-11 program. After the last benchmarking operation, factors were developed and used to derive adjusted sales and inventory estimates for the period January 1983 through January 1986. When unadjusted preliminary and final estimates become available, all estimates will be used as input to the X-11 program and new factors will be applied to the preliminary and final (one month before the preliminary) estimates and to the previous year estimates that correspond to the preliminary month. By using concurrent seasonal adjustment, there will be an improvement on the month-to-month and year-to-year seasonally adjusted trends. Before the introduction of concurrent seasonal adjustment, factors were computed twice a year and projected factors were used to adjust the preliminary and final estimates.

Table 4 presents, by kind of business, the combined seasonal and trading-day factors that are used to adjust inventory and sales estimates. For all kind of business, one month of projected factors are shown. These projected factors are estimates of the factors that will be used to derive adjusted estimates.

An electronic version of portions of this report is available through a commercial vendor as part of CENDATA, the Census Bureau's on-line information utility. For further information, contact Customer Services, DUSD, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 20233 or call (301) 763-4100.

Table 3. Coefficients of Variation of Sales and Inventories

(In percent)

SIC code	Kind of business	Sales						Inventories					
		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months		Coefficients of variation of the preliminary estimates		Coefficients of variation of the final estimates		Coefficients of variation of the ratio of two consecutive months	
		Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median	Range	Median
	Merchant wholesalers, total	1.3-1.9	1.5	1.4-1.8	1.6	0.5-0.9	0.7	1.4-1.6	1.6	1.3-1.6	1.5	0.3-0.4	0.4
50	Durable goods, total	1.5-1.9	1.6	1.4-1.7	1.6	0.8-1.0	0.9	1.7-2.0	1.8	1.6-1.9	1.7	0.2-0.5	0.4
501	Motor vehicles and automotive parts and supplies	3.6-5.6	4.5	3.5-5.4	3.8	1.2-3.2	1.8	2.8-4.0	3.6	2.7-3.8	3.5	0.5-1.1	0.9
502	Furniture and home furnishings	7.8-10.6	9.0	7.5-9.4	8.4	2.2-5.4	3.4	10.6-12.3	11.1	10.4-11.7	11.2	1.2-3.2	1.5
503	Lumber and other construction materials	5.2-7.0	6.1	5.3-6.6	6.0	1.5-3.2	1.5	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
505	Metals and minerals, ex. petroleum	4.9-6.1	5.9	4.6-6.0	5.5	2.0-2.5	2.2	3.7-4.4	3.8	3.4-4.2	3.7	0.7-2.8	1.1
506	Electrical goods	7.7-10.6	8.2	7.9-10.2	8.6	1.1-3.3	2.5	7.9-8.8	8.5	7.9-8.7	8.4	0.4-1.1	0.7
507	Hardware, plumbing, heating equipment, and supplies	6.6-8.9	7.5	6.0-7.7	6.9	1.8-5.7	2.5	4.7-6.7	5.8	5.1-6.3	5.8	0.6-1.4	0.8
508	Machinery, equipment, and supplies	2.7-3.9	3.3	2.6-3.3	3.0	1.1-2.6	1.7	3.2-3.5	3.4	3.2-3.6	3.3	0.3-1.5	0.6
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	3.9-5.9	4.8	4.1-4.9	4.5	1.9-3.6	2.8	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
51	Nondurable goods, total	2.4-3.1	2.7	2.3-3.1	2.8	0.7-1.1	1.0	2.3-2.8	2.4	2.1-3.1	2.5	0.3-1.1	0.8
511	Paper and paper products	4.3-5.1	4.5	4.1-4.9	4.2	1.2-2.6	1.8	6.6-7.2	6.9	6.5-7.1	6.7	0.8-1.2	0.9
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	7.6-8.7	8.1	7.2-9.0	7.5	1.3-4.3	2.0	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)	(S)
514	Groceries and related products	5.0-6.1	5.2	5.2-6.3	5.4	1.0-1.6	1.2	4.7-7.6	6.5	5.2-6.9	6.2	1.0-2.3	1.3
515	Farm-product raw materials	4.8-6.9	5.4	4.5-6.2	5.2	2.5-3.5	2.9	6.0-8.9	7.5	6.0-8.8	7.0	1.2-4.2	2.2
518	Beer, wine, and distilled alcoholic beverages	5.7-7.7	6.6	5.9-7.0	6.3	2.0-5.6	3.0	4.9-5.8	5.1	4.5-5.1	5.0	1.3-2.9	1.5
519	Misc. nondurable goods	3.1-6.2	3.8	2.9-5.5	3.9	1.3-3.6	2.4	7.3-9.1	7.8	7.2-8.3	7.7	1.0-2.5	1.7

S Data do not meet publication standards.

NOTE: Coefficients of variation are based on data unadjusted for seasonal variations or trading-day differences. The range and median coefficients of variation are based on data for August 1985 through January 1986.

Table 4. Seasonal Adjustment Factors for Sales and Inventories of Merchant Wholesalers

SIC code	Kind of business	1985	1986											1987
		Dec.[r]	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.[r]	Dec.[r]	Jan.
	Sales,[1] total	1.006	976	905	1.012	1.008	1.039	1.012	1.007	972	1.008	1.055	959	1.031	959
50	Durable goods	981	938	893	1.009	1.016	1.035	1.029	1.019	999	1.023	1.088	955	1.006	921
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	984	980	881	1.006	1.043	1.080	1.044	1.048	950	933	1.090	953	1.015	964
502	Furniture & home furnishings	949	898	898	983	1.059	1.028	1.028	998	986	1.043	1.156	982	971	868
503	Lumber & other construction mat	857	854	799	915	1.012	1.065	1.097	1.104	1.093	1.076	1.155	951	882	816
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	958	997	937	1.057	1.030	1.023	1.037	988	981	1.042	1.042	892	976	966
506	Electrical goods	1.039	909	897	994	959	956	1.003	1.020	1.006	1.080	1.110	1.018	1.060	906
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip.	946	948	890	951	1.023	1.029	1.036	1.061	1.027	1.015	1.094	950	969	926
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	1.019	934	907	1.016	1.036	1.040	1.027	996	982	1.027	1.055	932	1.038	912
509	Miscellaneous durable goods	930	977	895	1.018	1.025	1.019	971	955	999	1.055	1.092	977	945	962
51	Nondurable goods	1.031	1.000	915	1.017	1.005	1.056	1.002	999	959	994	1.029	966	1.052	986
511	Paper & paper products	978	1.009	931	992	1.009	999	999	1.006	1.017	1.008	1.080	943	1.005	984
512	Drugs, drug proprietaries and druggists' sundries	1.000	1.027	919	990	1.031	991	999	1.001	966	1.029	1.073	951	1.019	1.002
514	Groceries & related products	998	990	914	997	1.009	1.052	1.004	1.036	1.004	993	1.025	962	1.024	967
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.143	1.079	963	1.055	946	1.110	896	911	843	886	1.006	1.074	1.178	1.105
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	1.164	806	770	912	966	1.056	1.067	1.110	1.030	1.011	1.078	984	1.208	763
519	Misc. nondurable goods	966	895	848	1.040	1.064	1.212	1.082	1.000	952	977	1.008	916	985	875
	Inventories,[1] total	1.009	1.003	1.006	1.009	1.008	991	989	985	982	996	1.008	1.011	1.009	1.003
50	Durable goods	995	986	994	1.001	1.004	998	1.005	1.002	1.002	1.011	1.001	999	994	985
501	Motor vehicles & auto. equip	1.019	1.000	1.005	1.008	1.011	988	998	973	960	1.022	1.011	1.008	1.019	999
502	Furniture & home furnishings	1.024	996	1.019	998	982	989	1.002	990	1.015	1.010	1.004	993	1.027	1.003
505	Metals & minerals, ex. petroleum	1.010	989	995	992	978	995	1.011	1.012	1.017	1.010	985	989	1.010	995
506	Electrical goods	985	972	966	972	997	991	1.003	1.030	1.021	1.035	1.021	1.005	985	974
507	Hardware, plumbing & heating equip	966	980	1.005	1.024	1.040	1.030	1.002	1.010	998	983	981	977	965	975
508	Machinery, equip. & supplies	997	985	993	1.008	1.005	1.005	1.013	1.000	1.003	997	1.000	994	997	984
51	Nondurable goods	1.036	1.035	1.028	1.026	1.016	974	951	954	947	969	1.022	1.030	1.036	1.036
511	Paper & paper products	992	988	998	994	996	1.007	1.010	1.006	1.014	985	989	1.008	992	989
514	Groceries & related products	1.001	979	1.008	994	990	998	997	981	968	988	1.041	1.045	999	977
515	Farm-product raw materials	1.226	1.240	1.157	1.095	986	801	777	766	801	870	1.072	1.168	1.222	1.239
518	Beer, wine, & distilled beverages	913	932	953	979	1.020	1.001	1.027	1.027	993	1.009	1.063	1.064	912	934
519	Misc. nondurable goods	1.009	1.038	1.075	1.118	1.090	995	984	942	926	945	972	961	1.012	1.038

[r]Revised.

[1]Adjusted sales and inventory data shown in table 1A are obtained by dividing the unadjusted data by the adjustment factors shown above for the corresponding group. Adjusted data for the totals are obtained by adding the durable and nondurable goods. Seasonal factors shown for the totals will provide an approximation of the adjusted estimates, but may show small differences from the published data.

NOTE: Merchant wholesalers totals and group totals include data for some groups not shown separately. The seasonal factors shown have been computed based on monthly estimates through the current month preliminary estimate.

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